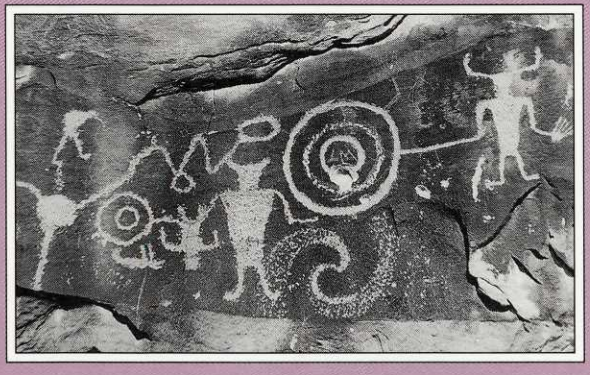
A HISTORY OF *Uintah County*

Scratching the Surface



Doris Karren Burton

UTAH CENTENNIAL COUNTY HISTORY SERIES

A HISTORY OF *Uintah County*

A HISTORY OF

Uintah County

Doris Karren Burton

Uintah County was one of the last frontiers to be settled in Utah. In 1861 Brigham Young sent surveyors and missionaries to explore the Uinta Valley for settlement. They returned with a negative report, stating the area "was one vast 'contiguity of waste' and measurably valueless, excepting for nomadic purposes, hunting grounds for Indians and to hold the world together." Indian Agent Henry Martin—wanting to forestall any future Mormon plans to settle the area—immediately asked that part of the Uinta Valley be set aside for a Ute Indian reservation. President Abraham Lincoln signed papers in 1861 to that effect, but it was not until late 1867 that Agent Pardon Dodds arrived at Whiterocks and established the Uintah Indian Agency.

This book covers the settlement of the county including Ute Indians, trappers, traders, and white settlers—both Mormon and non-Mormon—and examines the growth and development of the area.

Uintah County has become well known for its minerals—especially Gilsonite—and its petroleum resources have brought economic booms and busts to the area. Tourists now come to take advantage of its recreational opportunities and scenic beauty.

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1996
Utah State Historical Society
Uintah County Commission

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PREFACE

This book chronicles important events, places, people, and milestones in the history of Uintah County. It does not cover all occasions, individuals, clubs, and companies that are part of the past, as that would be an unabridged index of names and facts. Uintah County is so laden with history that one volume cannot cover all themes. The surface has only been scratched.

Though many landmarks have been lost, the historical record of Uintah County is greatly enriched by the work of Leo Thorne, S.P. Trim, and other early photographers. Many of their photographs can be viewed in this book and hopefully more will be seen in future publications. Rhoda Thorne DeVed and Lawrence DeVed deserve special thanks for allowing the Thorne Collection to be copied and placed in the files of the Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

This book could not have come about without considerable assistance from a host of individuals and institutions. In addition to those persons who provided photographs and are acknowledged in the photo captions, five important people who edited and critiqued

the manuscript were Rae Rasmussen, Joy Horton, Kent Powell, Craig Fuller, and Roy Webb. It is often difficult for authors to see their own mistakes, and the expertise of these readers has been invaluable. The following people either critiqued portions of the manuscript or shared insight: Evan Baker, Clifford Duncan, Dick Horton, Ralph Siddoway, Roy Showalter, Marilyn Hunting, Ray Hunting, Robert Hugie, Marvin Jackson, Vera Nyberg, Sara Helen Harvey Simmons, Joe Norton, Lawrence Siddoway, Chuck and Lillian Henderson, Glenn Cooper, Vanda McKeachnie, Donna Richins, Mike Wilkins, Pat McNeill, Randy Simmons, and David Haslem. Heartfelt thanks goes to each one of them and to scores of others who generously assisted with my research.

Uintah County, in cooperation with the Utah legislature, financed the writing and publishing of the book. Max Adams, H. Glen McKee, and Lorin Merrell were the commissioners at the time the project began who voted to join with the other twenty-eight counties to make this Utah centennial project a reality. Lewis Vincent replaced Max Adams in 1995 and became the commissioner with oversight responsibilities for the library. He has been extremely supportive.

The Utah State Historical Society undertook this project under mandate from the state legislature and is also due a vote of thanks, especially staff members Kent Powell and Craig Fuller. The *Vernal Express* has been generous with news coverage since the project began and has printed numerous articles on its progress. Without the *Vernal Express* Index, an ongoing program undertaken by Joy and Dick Horton, much of the information could not have been obtained and verified.

Several versions of many stories have been found, and it sometimes seems as if everyone's relative was the first to achieve a certain feat. A determined effort has been made to study the versions and identify the correct one. This has been accomplished by seeking out primary sources when possible and consulting the *Vernal Express* Index. Hundreds of hours have been spent by the author in the offices of the Uintah County Recorder, Treasurer, and Clerk, as well as the Uintah School District and Vernal City, tracing land ownerships, searching school district records and minutes, reading the

county commissioners' minutes and the Vernal City minutes, searching court records, and using other resources. Hopefully, no one will be offended at the conclusions. Certainly no toes were stepped on intentionally. Joy Horton and Rae Rasmussen have been careful in their editing to draw the author's attention to any "soap-boxing" or remarks that should be excluded. The goal has been to make this book historically accurate and to impart the unique flavor of Uintah County's history. That you find the book enjoyable and informative reading is the author's hope.

General Introduction

When Utah was granted statehood on 4 January 1896, twenty-seven counties comprised the nation's new forty-fifth state. Subsequently two counties, Duchesne in 1914 and Daggett in 1917, were created. These twenty-nine counties have been the stage on which much of the history of Utah has been played.

Recognizing the importance of Utah's counties, the Utah State Legislature established in 1991 a Centennial History Project to write and publish county histories as part of Utah's statehood centennial commemoration. The Division of State History was given the assignment to administer the project. The county commissioners, or their designees, were responsible for selecting the author or authors for their individual histories, and funds were provided by the state legislature to cover most research and writing costs as well as to provide each public school and library with a copy of each history. Writers worked under general guidelines provided by the Division of State History and in cooperation with county history committees. The counties also established a Utah Centennial County History Council

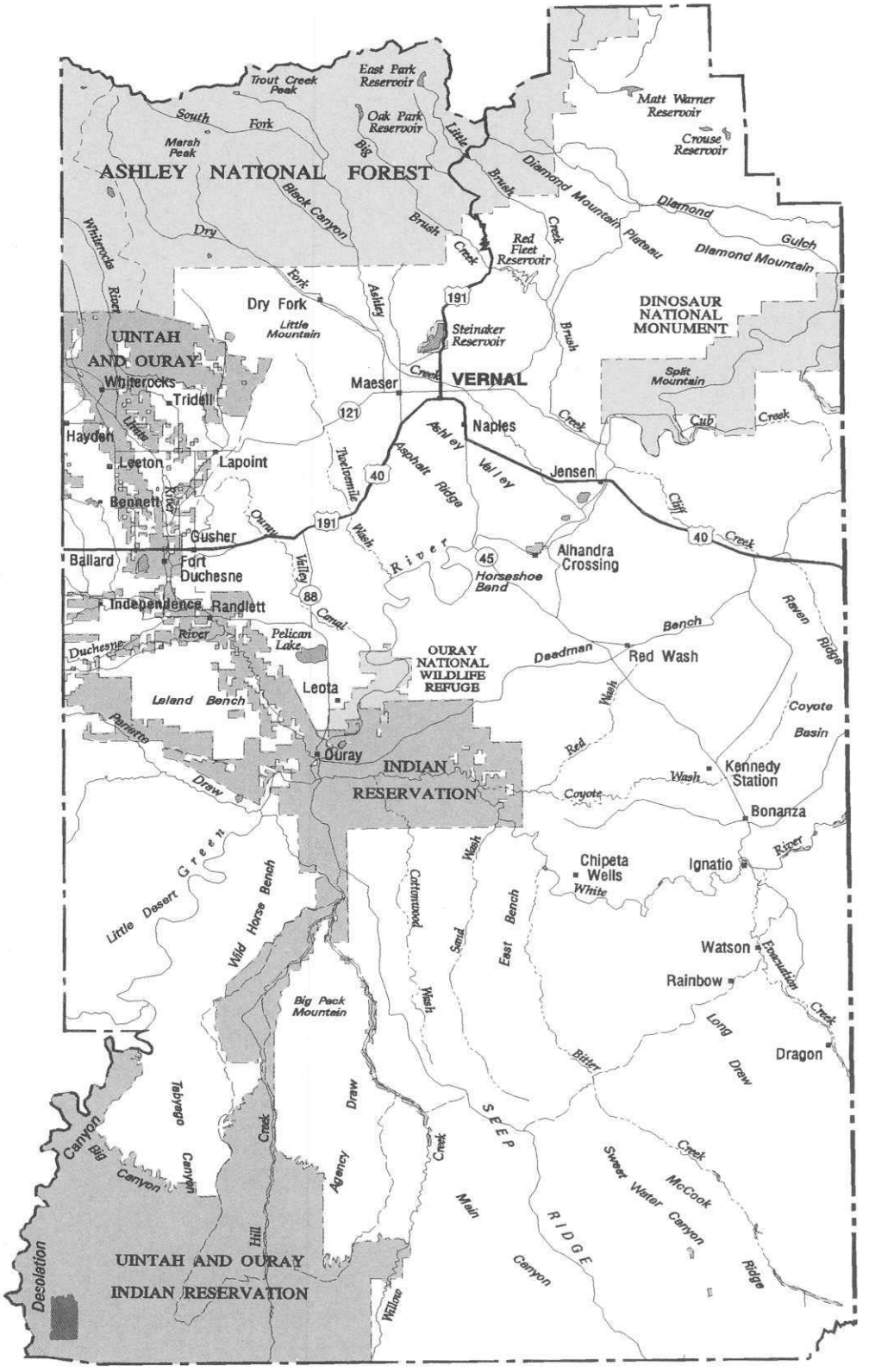
to help develop policies for distribution of state-appropriated funds and plans for publication.

Each volume in the series reflects the scholarship and interpretation of the individual author. The general guidelines provided by the Utah State Legislature included coverage of five broad themes encompassing the economic, religious, educational, social, and political history of the county. Authors were encouraged to cover a vast period of time stretching from geologic and prehistoric times to the present. Since Utah's statehood centennial celebration falls just four years before the arrival of the twenty-first century, authors were encouraged to give particular attention to the history of their respective counties during the twentieth century.

Still, each history is at best a brief synopsis of what has transpired within the political boundaries of each county. No history can do justice to every theme or event or individual that is part of an area's past. Readers are asked to consider these volumes as an introduction to the history of the county, for it is expected that other researchers and writers will extend beyond the limits of time, space, and detail imposed on this volume to add to the wealth of knowledge about the county and its people. In understanding the history of our counties, we come to understand better the history of our state, our nation, our world, and ourselves.

In addition to the authors, local history committee members, and county commissioners, who deserve praise for their outstanding efforts and important contributions, special recognition is given to Joseph Francis, chairman of the Morgan County Historical Society, for his role in conceiving the idea of the centennial county history project and for his energetic efforts in working with the Utah State Legislature and State of Utah officials to make the project a reality. Mr. Francis is proof that one person does make a difference.

ALLAN KENT POWELL
CRAIG FULLER
GENERAL EDITORS



UINTAH COUNTY

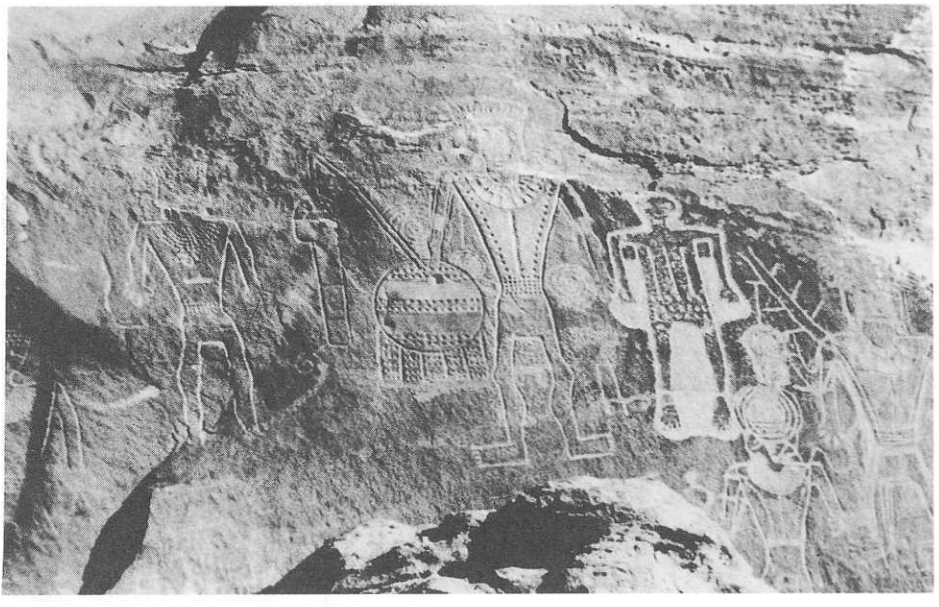
INTRODUCTION

Scratching the Surface

AN OVERVIEW OF HAPPENINGS IN UINTAH COUNTY

Geological changes over eons fashioned the immense mountains, exquisite valleys, and beautiful canyons of Uintah County. These canyons are the setting for famous rock art, so famous as to have given its name—Classic Vernal Style—to a whole class of rock art. This fabulous collection of petroglyphs, pictographs, and other forms of rock art have attracted worldwide attention. The famous "Three Kings" in Dry Fork Canyon are exceptional in detail and workmanship. Some of the most prominent figures in the Little Brush Creek sites are also a variation of the Classic Vernal Style. One such figure wears a helmet with rays extending from either side and holds a mask or head of the same inverted bucket-style helmet. The Prayer Rock and Indian Sundial are also located at the Brush Creek site. The ancient people have scratched the surface leaving a brief history of their existence.

Rock art and other archaeological evidence located in Uintah County indicate these prehistoric people or "mo-cutz," as the Ute Indians call them, occupied this area for centuries before the present Indian culture.[1] With the advent of modern equipment and new



The Three Kings petroglyphs in Dry Fork Canyon. (L. C. Thorne)

methodologies, archaeologists are gaining new insight and constantly updating ideas about the Uintah County prehistoric people. Just what happened to these ancient Indians and the time the Utes actually arrived in Uintah County are not certain.

Humans first arrived in Uintah County about 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. Many archaeologists believe these ancient men were descendants of immigrants who came to the North American continent across the Bering Strait during the late Pleistocene period. It was a time of nomadic life with temporary campsites located along routes where food and water were most easily obtainable.

Centrally located in the east-west-oriented Uinta Mountains and Uinta Basin area, Uintah County is the ninth largest county in Utah, covering approximately 4,476 square miles, or 5.44 percent of the state's area.[2] Elevations range from 4,365 to 12,280 feet. Uintah County shares the northeast corner of Utah with Daggett County, which borders Uintah on the north. The Uintah-Daggett county line partly follows the crest of the Uinta Range. Grand County borders Uintah County on the south, Carbon and Duchesne counties on the west, and the state of Colorado lies on its eastern border. From the

Utah-Colorado state line, Uintah County runs some forty-nine miles west to the Duchesne County line.[3]

Uintah County is part of two geographical provinces. The Uinta Mountains are an east-west spur of the Rocky Mountains, which forms the Rocky Mountain Geographical Province. The Uinta Basin, which is formed by the Uinta Mountains to the north, the Wasatch Range to the west, and the Roan and Book cliffs to the south, is part of the Colorado Plateau Province. The highest point in Uintah County is Mount Chipeta (12,280'), named for the wife of the prominent Ute Chief Ouray. Southwest a short distance is Marsh Peak (12,240'), second highest peak in the county. It is named for a Yale University paleontologist, Othniel C. Marsh, who headed an expedition to the Uinta Mountains to study fossil beds in 1870.[4]

The Uintas are one of the few mountain ranges in the world which lie in an east-west direction. Their south slope is dissected by many deep, steep-walled canyons. The spectacular, rugged canyons of the Green River are carved chiefly in Paleozoic formations. The main canyons are Brush Creek Gorge, north of Vernal, Ashley and Dry Fork to the northwest, and Whiterocks and Uintas in the extreme northwest.

The Uinta Basin, a structural depression paralleling the range on the south, is comprised of the lowland stream bottoms and badlands lying between the Uinta Range and the Tavaputs Plateau. The linear depression is dissected by several rivers. The Green River, largest tributary of the Colorado River and the most significant river in the basin, crosses Uintah County diagonally from northeast to southwest. Its headwaters flow out of the north-central portion of the Wind River Mountains in western Wyoming, and some of its tributaries drain the north, east, and south faces of the Uintas. Two major tributaries of the Green River are the Yampa River and the White River flowing from the east. The Yampa, flowing out of Colorado, joins the Green northeast of Vernal. The White River, with headwaters in Colorado, flows into the Green River below Ouray, Utah. The largest tributary from the west is the Duchesne River. This river enters the Green River near Ouray in the west central portion of the county. Other important water courses are the Uinta and Whiterocks rivers which flow into the Duchesne. Rock Creek, Yellowstone River, Lake

Fork River, and Strawberry River also drain into the Duchesne River. The major drainages and tributaries have produced a highly diversified terrain including badlands dominated by colorful mesas, buttes, cliff-bench topography, and other geologic features.

The Tavaputs Plateau which includes southern Uintah County is a northward-sloping area bounded on the south by outward-facing retreating escarpments known as the Roan Cliffs and the Book Cliffs. Elevation at the southern county line attains 8,000 feet.[5] The average elevation of the basin floor is 5,000 feet. Uintah County is unique in its geological display of one billion years of prehistoric life.

The first documented account of white men coming into Uintah County is from the Spanish Dominguez-Escalante expedition. Originally comprised of ten men, but supplemented by several Indian guides along the way, the expedition left Santa Fe, New Mexico, on 29 July 1776.Their 2,000-mile journey took them north through western Colorado, west through the Uinta Basin to Utah Lake, then south through northern Arizona, and east back to Santa Fe by January 1777. The expedition failed to reach Monterey, California, its original goal. A second objective was to locate possible sites among the Indians for the eventual establishment of missions. The expedition passed through the Uinta Basin after reaching the Green River above present Jensen, Utah, on 13 September 1776.

No known records exist of what happened in Uintah County during the next fifty years, but apparently Spanish officials, fearing unrestrained trade would provoke hostility from the Indians, discouraged further expeditions. Incidents of violation became increasingly common, however; men were apprehended and tried for illegal trade in 1783, 1785, and 1789. With the threat of increasing American encroachment into the continent's western regions at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Spaniards relaxed their restrictive policy and even encouraged trade with the Indians in hopes of securing their friendship, but they had waited too long, and the days of Spanish influence were numbered.[6]

It was not until 1824, during the great beaver trapping era, that records show explorers, trappers, and fur traders entered the area. Others may have been there sooner, but no written record exists. Etienne Provost, a Catholic of French ancestry for whom Provo,

Utah, is named, was probably here earlier, but as he could neither read nor write, he left no record. Provost and his men had followed the Domínguez-Escalante Trail from New Mexico and camped on the Green River near the mouth of White River during the winter of 1824–25.[7]

Also by 1824 the big fur companies were in operation, and explorers, trappers, and traders were coming to the area not only north from Taos but also west from St. Louis. Among the several trappers and traders who traversed the Uinta Basin in 1824 were Etienne Provost, Antoine Robidoux, William Becknell, William Heddest, and William Huddard.

One man who left a special mark on Uintah County was William Ashley. He was responsible for the first American fur-trading rendezvous held just north of the present Utah-Wyoming border on Henry's Fork of the Green River in 1825. Before this time the furs were packed out by the trappers on mules or transported in boats. Ashley led an expedition down the Green River to explore the area for beaver. The group floated down the river in bullboats made of willows and buffalo hide. At Red Canyon, Ashley painted an inscription on a rock giving his name and the date, 1825. As he passed through Uintah County, he met Ute Indians. These Utes, unlike their ancestors of fifty years earlier, were mounted, and about half of them possessed British-made guns.[8] Ashley found them to be friendly and willing for the Americans to come into their lands to trap and trade. He observed that beaver were plentiful in the rivers and streams. Ashley obtained horses from the Indians and from Provost's men at their camp on the Green. He traveled across Strawberry Valley, where he met Provost, and, after exploring the nearby countryside, they traveled together back to Henry's Fork for the 1825 rendezvous.

Many entities in Uintah County are named after William Ashley including: Ashley Center, Ashley Valley, Ashley Town, Ashley Ward, Ashley Falls, and Ashley Valley High School. The first baby boy born in Ashley Center was named Ashley Bartlett. Ashley Creek, as it is now called, was named Ashley River by early residents. In the spring during high water it even now looks like a river. At that time no canals or other streams were diverted out of the river, leaving it to

flow unimpeded through the valley and into the Green River where it was first viewed by trappers and explorers.

In 1828 the first trading post was established in Uintah County at Whiterocks. Three French trappers and traders from Kentucky—William Reed, Denis Julien, and a young nephew of William, Jimmy Reed—traveled north from Taos and built the Reed Trading Post at the confluence of the Whiterocks and Uinta rivers. A year or two later another young man, Auguste Pierre Archambeau, who had run away from home, joined the group at the post. Young Jimmy Reed married an Indian girl named Wah Ve Dah, and many descendants of this couple are still living in Uintah County.[9]

The Reed family sold the trading post to French-American trader Antoine Robidoux in 1832.[10] Robidoux's fort was named Fort Uintah, sometimes called Fort Winte or Twinty by trappers and Indians. It is believed to be the first year-round dwelling of white men in Utah. Although other traders came into the area, Robidoux monopolized the fur trade. He traded with Indians, trappers, and free traders. He also employed about twenty men who trapped for him. This post operated until it was burned by Ute Indians in 1844.

Topographical exploration began in Uintah County in 1834 when Warren Angus Ferris spent the winter on the Green River. His map is one of the first of the area. Ten years later John Charles Fremont completed the first comprehensive survey of the valley. He was guided by Kit Carson. The next survey was completed by John Wesley Powell, who began his explorations in 1869.

In 1847 the Mormons arrived in the Salt Lake Valley and began settling the areas north and south of Salt Lake. The Uinta Basin was one of the last frontiers in Utah to be colonized. In 1861 a daily overland stagecoach mail and semiweekly Pony Express central route was established from Missouri to Sacramento. Officials in Denver wanted the route to go from Denver to Salt Lake and sent a party headed by Captain E.L. Berthoud to search for a feasible pass through the mountains. Berthoud made the journey to Uintah County, but it took him so long that the decision was made to stay with the Wyoming route.

Brigham Young, upon learning the route might run from Denver to Salt Lake through the Uinta Basin, immediately called about thirty

missionaries (later three were excused and eleven new names added) to start for the basin, commenting, "I have been requested several times to permit a settlement in that valley. . . . The Gentiles will take possession of that valley if we do not and I do not wish them to have it."

The group was to build a road as they traveled and was preceded by an exploring and surveying team. The team returned and gave Brigham Young a negative report of the area, saying, "The area was one vast contiguity of waste, and measurably valueless, excepting for nomadic purposes, hunting grounds for Indians and to hold the world together."[11] The *Deseret News* went on to criticize the positive assessment of earlier explorers. Upon receiving this information, Young canceled all arrangements for establishing the settlement and recalled the men.[12]

At the same time, Indian agent Henry Martin requested that the Uinta Basin be set aside as an Indian reservation. President Abraham Lincoln established the Uintah Indian Reservation by executive order on 3 October 1861, and on 5 May 1864 the reservation was further recognized by an act of Congress.

Captain Pardon Dodds was the first Indian agent. He was appointed in 1868 and took over the agency which was then located at the foot of Mount Tabby near Tabiona where an Indian encampment was located. He moved the agency to the confluence of Rock Creek and the Duchesne River that summer. He also moved the Uintah Utes to Whiterocks on Christmas Day, 1869. This site was chosen as the permanent location for the agency as the Indians were used to trading previously with Reed and Robidoux at Whiterocks.[13]

Dodds recognized the agricultural potential of the Uinta Basin and began building up a personal cattle herd. After completing his term as Indian agent, he settled near the reservation in what was to become known as Ashley Valley.

Other men began drifting into the area. Soon a settlement, known as Ashley, took shape about four miles northwest of present-day Vernal. A post office was created on 27 December 1878. It operated until 17 November 1899, after which mail was obtained at the Vernal post office, established in 1886.[14]

Teancum Taylor, a Mormon polygamist, settled near the big

spring in 1877 in what later became known as Dry Fork. This settlement soon prospered with the arrival of twenty-seven families.

Jensen, which lies on the Green River, was settled in 1877 when Isaac Burton, Sr., and family settled at the junction of Brush Creek and Green River on 17 November. This settlement was originally known as Riverdale.

As families continued to arrive, other settlements or LDS wards were formed. Mill Ward, later named Maeser, came into existence in 1877. In 1878 three families moved onto what was called the Bench and planted crops. The settlement grew and went by three names—Jerico, then Hatch Town, and finally Ashley Center—before it was named Vernal in 1886.

The general area was part of Green River County when Congress established the Territory of Utah in 1850. In 1862 Wasatch County was created, and Ashley Valley became a part of that county. Ashley remained a part of Wasatch County for the next eighteen years with Heber City as the county seat. Because of the long trip from Ashley to the county seat, 136 people signed a petition in January 1880 asking the legislature to form a new county called Coal County in Ashley Valley. The legislature agreed to create the new county but gave it the name of Uintah County. It was formed 8 February 1880. The county seat was Ashley until 1893 when it was moved to Vernal, which became an incorporated city in 1897. Three years later construction of the magnificent LDS tabernacle was begun in Vernal.

During the 1880s two military forts were established within the county. Fort Thornburgh was located at Ouray in 1881, then moved to the mouth of Dry Fork Canyon in 1883, and abandoned by the spring of 1884. Fort Duchesne was established in 1886 about midway between the Uintah and Ouray Indian agencies.

Discovery of Gilsonite on the reservation brought profound changes to the area and greatly affected the Indians. In 1888 Congress was persuaded to cut a triangle of land containing 7,040 acres from the reservation so that Gilsonite could be mined.This became known as "the Strip," wide open to gambling, alcohol, prostitution—free from all law.

The mining of Gilsonite also began in Bonanza, southeast of Vernal, in 1888. Other company-owned mining settlements were

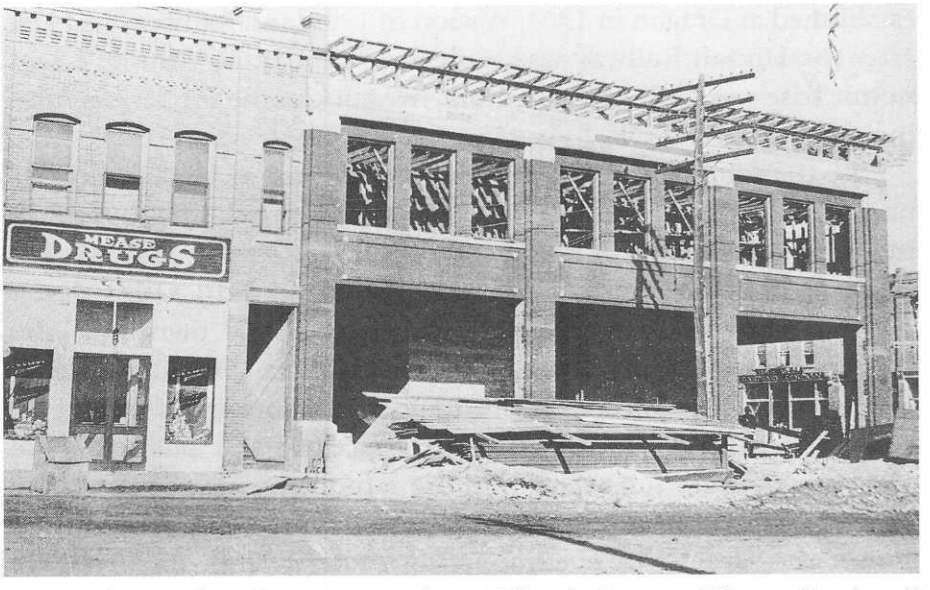
established at Dragon in 1904, Watson in 1905, and Rainbow in 1912, after the Uintah Railway was built in 1904. Uintah County's economic base was built on agriculture, livestock, some timbering, mining, freighting, and oil.

By the turn of the century, the population of Uintah County numbered 6,458, of whom 1,790 were school-age children, prompting the construction of five new schoolhouses—Central, Naples, Glines, Jensen, and Maeser—between 1900 and 1910. Other developments included the arrival of the first automobile, owned by John W. Pope, in 1905; installation of electric lights in 1907; the designation of the Ashley National Forest and establishment of the Vernal City Library in 1908; local telephone service in 1909; the installation of a water system for Vernal and the establishment of the Uintah State Bank in 1910; and the construction in 1911 of the Jensen Bridge across the Green River, connecting eastern Utah and western Colorado.

The population continued to expand with the opening of the Uintah Reservation to white settlers in 1905. Small settlements were developed at Tridell, Lapoint, Avalon, Bennett, Hayden, Independence, Leota, and Leeton. In 1914 Duchesne residents successfully petitioned for their own county; it was carved out of Wasatch County in January 1915.

The second decade of the twentieth century saw 700 young men from Uintah County register for the draft and 318 of them serve in the military during World War I. Fifteen Uintah County men gave their lives during the war. Local residents joined in the war effort, purchasing war bonds, donating clothing, shearing sheep, producing bean seeds, and saving fruit stones and pits to be used in the manufacture of gas masks. During the war residents on the north side of the Uinta Mountains petitioned for the establishment of their own county, and the result was the creation of Daggett County on 1 January 1918.

A nationwide flu epidemic also struck Uintah County in 1918. In Vernal six funerals were held one week due to the flu. Gauze masks became a common sight. Regulation masks consisted of at least eight thicknesses of gauze, six by eight inches, completely covering the mouth and nose. Every person entering a store or other public build-



Bank of Vernal under construction. (Uintah County Library Regional History Center—UCLRHC, Donna Abegglin collection)

ing was required to wear one. Voters even had to wear gauze masks at the November election. Schools, churches, theaters, and all public functions were closed as the epidemic raged. In December 1918 Dr. Edwin W. Tolhurst, who had been working to save the flu victims, succumbed to the disease himself, as did Vernal's undertaker, Elmer Dillman. Until then, Dillman had been present at every funeral, providing services and comfort to families. The deaths brought a shortage of caskets, prompting Elisha Campbell to start making them. A total of 107, including 62 Indians and 45 whites, died of the disease.

The new Bank of Vernal was built in 1917, and by 1920 the county population numbered 8,470. The 1920s was a period of general prosperity and community growth for Uintah County. The Vernal-Manila road was constructed; local sheepmen sent nearly a million pounds of wool to market annually; development of the county's oil shale resources began; a local Lion's Club was organized and a J.C. Penny store was opened in Vernal in 1927; natural gas was provided to Vernal in 1929; sidewalks and streets were paved; and by 1930 the Victory Highway (present-day U.S. Highway 40) was paved between Vernal and Salt Lake City.

The impact of the Great Depression and the New Deal relief efforts were felt in Uintah County during the 1930s. The Depression affected Vernal citizens in many different ways. Those with money found the low prices put them in a better financial position than they had been in the 1920s. On the other hand, many ranchers and land owners who had loans at the Bank of Vernal lost their livelihood as the bank foreclosed on loans. Others lost their homes and farms when they were unable to pay taxes. People who had money benefited from buying property at tax sales for next-to-nothing, but most families were living from hand-to-mouth. One family told how a cow was sold for thirty-two dollars in the fall, which was all the cash available to live on until the next summer. Farm families who had a milk cow, chickens, and a garden at least had food to eat. The problem was finding enough cash to pay rent or mortgages and taxes and to buy shoes and clothing. Churches and the government set up soup lines for people who were near starvation.

The county benefited from such New Deal programs as the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), Works Progress Administration (WPA), and the Civil Works Administration (CWA). Young men hired under the CCC program lived in a camp of tents and barracks at the county fairgrounds in Vernal, receiving one dollar a day plus food and shelter. Twelve reservoirs were constructed; many miles of roads, corrals, and fences were built; and other range work in the area was completed. Eradication measures against prairie dogs, kangaroo rats, and Mormon crickets were undertaken. Many of the CCC workers were from the eastern United States, and a number of them married local girls and stayed on after the CCC camps were closed in November 1941.

Local men employed under the CWA and WPA programs laid asphalt on the streets, built sidewalks, and installed a sewer system for Vernal. Schools were constructed, and the original rodeo grandstand was built. Hundreds of outhouses were built, painted white with green trim, and placed around the area. Other public workers conducted history interviews with Indians at Fort Duchesne, painted pictures for public buildings, compiled county archive listings, and began preliminary excavation work at the dinosaur quarry. County residents also benefited from other New Deal programs such as the Federal Deposit

Insurance Corporation, National Youth Administration, Social Security, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, National Recovery Administration, and the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) which employed teachers, distributed surplus goods from the federal government, and furnished lunches to school children. The Moon Lake Electric Cooperative was organized with the help of the Rural Electrification Administration in 1939.

The outbreak of World War II, first in Europe in September 1939 and then in the Pacific on 7 December 1941 with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, brought an end to the Depression and new challenges for the county. Fifty-six tons of scrap iron were collected during the 1942 war drive, and twenty-three tons of rubber were gathered during a countywide rubber drive. Boy Scouts undertook a "Victory Garden Project," and the Uintah County USO sent 356 books to men in the service. Nearly all residents participated in the war-bond and stamp drives; also, rationing was implemented for sugar and gas and a statewide thirty-five-mile-an-hour speed limit was enforced. A total of 1,095 Uintah County residents served in the armed forces, including 740 who were drafted and 355 who enlisted. Among the volunteers was Judy Shannon, one of Uintah County's first women to join the military. Thirty county residents lost their lives in this war.

Uintah County's postwar economy grew, fueled by a local oil boom which began in 1948 when J. L. Dougan put the first successful oil well into production. A year earlier, in 1947, Uintah County's first radio station, KJAM, began broadcasting. Television arrived in the county in 1956 through a subscription service provided by the Basin Television Company. Both television and radio would have a significant influence during the future decades, especially among the county's youth who adopted—much to the distress of some parents as well as educational and religious leaders—many of the fashions, fads, and music brought to their attention through the miracle of electronics.

Tourism was enhanced with the opening of the Utah Field House of Natural History in October 1948, while plans were completed for the construction of Union High School straddling the county line on the eastern outskirts of Roosevelt. This school was owned by both Uintah and Duchesne county school districts.

Following the outbreak of the Korean conflict, an "Americanism Committee," chaired by Marguerite Colton, organized the Uintah Service Association to sponsor patriotic activities that included sending a newsletter to all Uintah County servicemen. The threat of nuclear war with the Soviet Union was taken seriously as local officials launched a drive for home preparedness including family fallout shelters and the installation of a combination civil defense and fire alarm atop the Vernal City Building.

The late 1950s saw a renewed economic boom for Uintah County with construction of the Steinaker Dam and Flaming Gorge Dam (both of which were completed in 1963), the discovery of new oil reserves, and the construction of a regional gas transmission line by El Paso Natural Gas Corporation through the northeast portion of the Uinta Basin. County residents benefited from advances in medicine including the discovery of the Salk polio vaccine, with nearly 16,000 doses administered from March through May 1963.[15]

The 1960s also brought additional attention to the area's recreation and tourist possibilities. The county hosted a visit by former U.S. Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy and his family for a raft trip down the Green River in 1965. Vernal City began operating the local golf course as a public facility. Work began on the Jones Hole Fish Hatchery Road, and the Ute Indian tribe started construction of the Bottle Hollow Resort in 1968; it was opened three years later. The centennial of the historic 1869 voyage of John Wesley Powell down the Green and Colorado rivers was commemorated at Split Mountain in Dinosaur National Monument on 26 June 1969.

The 1970s were again "boom" years for Uintah County. The population of Vernal more than doubled between 1970 and 1975. The 1970 census indicated 3,908 people resided in Vernal City; five years later the population had grown to 7,993. The population in Uintah County in 1970 was 12,684 and had increased to 20,479 by 1980. Included in the 1980 census were six blacks, 1,952 Indian, 47 Asians, and 565 Hispanics.[16] A peak population of 25,300 was reached in 1983, just before an economic slump hit the county; the accompanying out-migration rate of 4.9 percent from July 1987 to January 1988 was the highest in Utah. By 1990 the county population had stabilized at 22,211 residents. The population of the county in 1996 is esti-

mated to be 25,600, growing at a rate of 2.4 percent per year. Records indicate 136 dwellings were built in 1975, and from 1975 through 1979 an average of 104 dwellings were constructed each year.

Contributing to the boom was the opening of Stauffer Chemical Company's Vernal phosphate-mining operation on the old Harry Ratliff property on Brush Creek, which began production on 1 July 1969. The plant went on a 300,000-ton yearly production basis, running three eight-hour shifts seven days a week. Construction of the Jensen Unit of the Central Utah Project (now known as Red Fleet Reservoir) began in 1977 and was completed in 1980.[17] Oil production boomed following the international oil crisis of 1973. Development of the region's oil shale deposits was encouraged by the Department of the Interior as a way to help the United States become less dependent on oil imports. The Bonanza Power Plant provided work for hundreds of construction workers and for 130 full-time employees after it was dedicated on 20 September 1985.

In addition to the vagaries of a boom-bust economy, Uintah County residents have faced other challenges during the past two decades. National and international events such as the Vietnam conflict, Watergate, the outbreak of the AIDs epidemic, and the Persian Gulf War have drawn notice and concern. Local issues and problems also demanded attention. They included illegal drugs, a devastating Mountain Pine Beetle infestation which claimed about 70 percent of the pine trees in the Vernal and Daggett ranger districts in 1984, Ute tribal jurisdictional and boundary disputes, a bid to make Dinosaur National Monument a national park, the establishment of the High Uinta Wilderness Area, several minor earthquakes, the omission of tar sands and oil shale from President George Bush's National Energy Policy, and the construction of badly needed county facilities including a new library and adult activity center. Attention focusing on what to do with the historic Uintah LDS Stake Tabernacle climaxed in 1994 with the decision to renovate it for use as a temple—the first such renovation in the history of the LDS church.[18]

As Uintah County looks ahead to the twenty-first century, the traditional cornerstones of the economy—agriculture, oil, and mining—remain important. In addition, tourism will play an increasingly large role in the county's economy. The wide variety of scenery—changing



Civilian Conservation Corps Company 1507 camp headquarters. (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne Collection)

from the lush green forests and glacial lakes of the high Uinta Mountains to the deep rugged canyons and gorges cut through many layers of the earth's crust, as well as the spectacular formations created by erosion in the colorful sandstone—offers the visitor unequaled

attractions. Dinosaur National Monument, Dinosaur Quarry, and Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area attract thousands of visitors each year. The Utah Field House of Natural History in Vernal is another outstanding tourist attraction. These, along with the Western Park Museum, the Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum, river running, petroglyphs, Brush Creek Cave, ghost towns, and such geological attractions as the famous "Drive through the Ages tour," make Uintah County a favorite tourist destination.

ENDNOTES

1. Jay Monaghan, "Fort Robidoux," 59, unpublished manuscript, copy in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center, Vernal, Utah. In this Civil Works Administration oral histories project (1933–34), Monaghan interviewed members of the Ute Tribe and stated the Indians call ancient people "mo-cutz," which are people who are gone or dead.

2. The National Board of Geographic Names applies the spelling "Uintah" to political subdivisions, such as counties, reservations, etc., and the spelling "Uinta" to mountains, streams, and other geographic features. See G.E. Untermann and B.R. Untermann, *Geology of Uintah County* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1968), 13.

Uintah is an Indian word and there is disagreement about what it means. Some believe it means "that (country) at the foot of long-leaf timber pines, clear stream flowing." According to Albert B. Reagan, the word Uintah is derived from the word Uintaugump, Uinta meaning "at edge of pine" and Ugump, "the stream of water at edge of pine." He theorizes that the combined word refers to a dwelling place located north of present-day Whiterocks where a point of land is formed by two streams coming together at an angle and where long-leafed pines grow; *Utah Historical Quarterly* 6:103. Francis Desmore stated in a 1928 promotional booklet that it means "that at the foot of long-leaf, timber pines, clear streams are flowing," E. Peterson states in "Our Indian Settlers" that the word Uintah signifies "the place where pines come down the river." However, most of the old Uintah Indians state that the word means "land high up where timber grows." Uintah was probably not the original name of the region; more likely it was Uimpah Ow-ump. Uim means "around," pah, "water," and Ow-ump is the "long-leafed pine tree."

3. Statistics in this paragraph were provided by Randy Simmons, Uintah County Recorder. Chipeta Peak is the highest peak in Uintah County. The USGS map, Whiterocks Lake Quadrangle, 1963, shows two bench marks: one is listed as Chipeta at 12,267, the other is listed as

Eccentric at 12,276. Simmons states that sometime after 1963 another survey shot was made, and the eccentric bench mark on Chipeta Peak now lists the nominal elevation at 12,280. In a 14 December 1992 *Deseret News* story by Lynn Arave it was said that the highest peak in Uintah County was Eccentric Peak. There is no Eccentric Peak; this was just a name they used on the bench mark to show it deviated from the other Chipeta bench mark.

4. John W. Van Cott, *Utah Place Names* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990), 245.

5. Untermann, *Geology of Uintah County,* 13–14, 16.

6. David J. Weber, *The Taos Trappers; The Fur Trade in the Far Southwest, 1540–1846* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), 28.

7. Floyd A. O'Neil and Gregory C. Thompson, *A Short History of the Uinta Basin, Utah* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah American West Center, 1975), 8.

8. Dale L. Morgan, ed., *The West of William Ashley* (Denver: Old West Publishing Co., 1964), 115–16, 277–80.

9. John Barton, *Buckskin Entrepreneur: Antoine Robidoux's Fur Trade with the Ute Indians, 1824–1844* (Vernal: n.p., 1995), 47; Mary Reed Harris, interview by Mildred Miles Dillman in *Early History of Duchesne County* (Springville, UT: Art City Publishing Company, 1948), 69.

10. Julius Orn Murray, interview by John D. Barton, 3 October 1988, Alterra, Utah. Murray is the grandson of James Reed and remembers his grandfather telling him about setting up the Reed Trading Post and the sale of that post to Robidoux in 1832.

11. *Deseret News,* 25 September 1861.

12. Letter, 9 August 1995, and records provided to the author by James L. Kimball, Jr., research librarian in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Historical Department, in Salt Lake City, Utah.

13. J.H. Head to Commissioner E.S. Parker, 24 May 1869, microcopy no. 234, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

14. John S. Gallagher, *The Post Offices of Utah* (Burtonville, MD: The Depot, 1977), 57.

15. *Vernal Express,* 7 March, 11 April, and 25 April 1963.

16. Wayne L. Wahlquist, ed., *Atlas of Utah* (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1980), 273.

17. *Vernal Express,* 5 March, 13 August, 24 September, 15 October, and 13 December 1970.

18. Ibid., 15 January, 5 February, 11 March, 25 March, 22 April, 29 April, 27 May, and 7 October 1992.

1

Trailblazers

Path of the Ute Indians

Oral traditions of the Utes indicate that the Nooche or the People—the Utes' ancestors—have always lived in Utah and Colorado. The Utes' traditional homelands extended from as far west as central Millard County, Utah, east to the Front Range near Denver, Colorado, and from the present Wyoming state line on the north to the New Mexico state line, the San Juan River, and the Escalante River on the south. The Ute language suggests that the People migrated to Utah and Colorado from the American Southwest.

Over time in Utah and Colorado the People divided into bands.[1] The Utes adapted to the environment of the two states, living near dependable sources of food, including nuts, roots, berries, and, of course, water. Most bands of Utes had readily available large game such as buffalo, antelope, mountain sheep, mule deer, and elk. In addition to food, big game provided a source of clothing and shelter for the bands of Utes who lived in northeastern Utah and northwestern Colorado. The Uinta-ats (later called Tavaputs), PahVant, Tumpanawach, and some Cumumba and Sheberetch of Utah were gathered together at the Uintah agency during the late 1860s and

early 1870s to form the Uintah Band. The Parianuche Band, who lived in northeastern Utah and northwestern Colorado, joined with the Yamparika (later White River) band of Colorado and became known as the Uncompahgre Band which was also moved to Uinta Basin. Extensive trade was conducted among the Uintah and Parianuche and other bands of Utes as well as between neighboring tribes. Fred A. Conetah, a Fort Duchesne Ute, states:

> Europeans began invading the Ute lands about 1550. At first the intruders were few in numbers. The Ute People received them with courtesy and kindness. But there were more and more intruders, and they made more and more demands. They demanded alliances, trade, and finally the land and its resources. They repaid the Utes with disease, whiskey, wanton killing, worthless items of "civilization" and broken promises.[2]

Some of the Utes in the Southwest acquired horses shortly after the Spanish arrived in the 1600s; by the middle of the 1700s most bands had them. This development dramatically altered the relationships among the bands of Utes and between Utes and other tribes.[3] Ute Indians living in Colorado acquired horses before the bands living to the west. The Timpanogots of central Utah were still without horses in 1776 when the Dominguez-Escalante expedition reached Utah Valley, though they had heard about horses and were anxious to see and try riding them. Possibly Comanches who frequented the Uinta Basin at that time were so strong the Utes' fear of them prevented taking horses from Colorado to central Utah.[4]

The Utes were interested in allying themselves with the Spaniards for defense against the well-armed Comanches. After nearly thirty years of periodic fighting, the Ute-Spanish forces, with their Apache and Pueblo allies, defeated the Comanches, who then moved farther south. With the Apaches moving farther south and west, the southern band of Utes were left in control of the lands north of New Mexico. In 1786 Spanish governor Juan Baptista de Anza arranged peace between Comanche leader Ecueracapa and southern Ute leaders Mora and Pinto. Soon the Spaniards persuaded the Navajos to join this alliance, which was to last until the beginning of the nineteenth century.

When Father Escalante passed through Ashley Valley in 1776, he mentioned in his diary seeing tracks and fires of Indians who Ute guides said were Comanche Indians.[5] The Timpanogots guide explained that his people had once lived on upper Strawberry River but had withdrawn for fear of the Comanches.[6] According to the expedition's cartographer, Don Bernardo Miera y Pacheco, Comanche Yamparica (Yampatica), who had "a few years ago first appeared to the Ute saying they came from a band in the north,"[7] had dominated northwestern Colorado and evidently threatened the Utes of the Uinta Basin to the extent of driving them across the Wasatch. To the Spanish the word "Comanche" meant "wild enemy Indian." The Comanches in question were a mounted group that had a strong hold on the Yampa and White River regions of northwestern Colorado,[8] and evidently controlled the Uintah County area. Shoshoni and Ute Indians were enemies, as were Comanches and Utes. Indian ethnologists place Comanche Indians' origins in the mountain regions of Wyoming and Idaho with their being originally one people with the Shoshoni.[9] Ute expansion beyond the Uinta Mountains was inhibited by Northern Shoshoni and Wind River tribes.

Utes and Northern Shoshoni were bitter enemies and carried out raids against each other. An account of a Shoshoni raid on a Ute village near Dinosaur Quarry was told by Ute leader Quinance to Shirley Daniels when Quinance and a hunting party crossed Green River and camped near Daniels's ranch in 1905.[10] Daniels had found many Indian artifacts on his ranch and asked if an Indian village had been located on that site at some time. Quinance told him a Ute village was there about 1780 or 1790. Northern Indians raided the village, demolished the tents, killed those who resisted, and made slaves of the rest. One young warrior, who was absent during the raid, followed the band to their winter camp in the Wind River Mountains where he rescued his sweetheart and returned south, avoiding capture.[11]

The early Utes in Uintah County were the Uinta-ats, a small band of a few hundred members.[12] Before they acquired horses, much of their time was devoted to gathering roots, nuts, and berries and hunting small game. They also caught fish in abundance and learned to

dry and store them for winter. But their simple lifeways were soon interrupted by mounted Comanches who forced them out of their traditional Uinta Basin homeland. After the Uinta-ats acquired horses, the Comanches could no longer maintain a permanent hold on the Yampa and White River region, and the Ute band regained their territory. When traders and trappers arrived in the Uinta Basin in the 1820s, the Uinta-ats were numerous and well-mounted. As bison became extinct in Utah about 1830, they went on some expeditions to hunt surviving herds around Bridger, Wyoming. The Utes continued to fight their traditional enemies, the Comanche.[13]

With the trappers gone in the 1840s, the Indian way of life in Uintah County reverted somewhat to what it had been before; however, by 1847 their homeland was once again invaded, this time by the arrival of the Mormons in the Salt Lake Valley. The first winter the Mormons spent in the Salt Lake Valley brought great destruction to the Ute people. Measles carried by the new arrivals spread quickly among the Indians who visited them. As Indians had little immunity to the disease, many of them died. The Mormons buried thirty-six in one grave alone.[14] The year 1848 brought skirmishes when 200 Mormons moved to the Sanpete Valley. The settlers occupied traditional Ute lands, disrupting the natives' traditional economy and food supply with their herds of livestock. The result was increased tension and hostilities between the two groups of people.

Despite these difficulties, LDS church officials sought to convert the Indians to the Mormon faith. In 1849 Isaac Morely baptized Utah's most famous Ute leader, Wakara, or Walker, giving rise to one of Utah's most famous legends—the lost Rhoades gold mine. According to the most often repeated version of the story, while at Spirit Lake in the Uinta Mountains many years before the arrival of the Mormons, Walker received a vision in which the great "Towats" revealed to him the location of gold in the mountains. Walker was to be the guardian of the gold until the "high hats" came at which time he was to tell them the secret. After Walker's baptism, Isaac Morely is said to have negotiated a secret agreement between Brigham Young and Walker whereby one mutually trusted man would be chosen to bring gold from the mines in the Uinta Mountains for the use of the Mormons. The man chosen was Thomas Rhoades, and the gold he

found in the secret mines was reportedly used for such purposes as the minting of Mormon coins and plating the statue of the Angel Moroni on the eastern spire of the Salt Lake temple.[15]

The Uinta-ats living in Uintah County were not directly affected by the Mormons, who did not penetrate the area until the 1870s. However, Walker did come to this area with stories of the Mormon people and their ways and of skirmishes and raids due to them. As the new settlers encroached on more and more Ute land in central Utah, Indian refugees drifted into the Uinta Basin, which the Mormons had decided was unsuitable for their own settlement. This continuous influx of Indian population was absorbed into the Uintah Band.

With the organization of Utah Territory in 1850, Brigham Young was appointed both territorial governor and superintendent of Indian affairs. It was not until 21 July 1851 that Young made his first official act as superintendent. He divided the territory into three Indian agencies, which included the Uintah Agency with Jacob H. Holeman, a Kentucky non-Mormon, as agent and Major Stephen B. Rose, a Mormon from New Jersey, as sub-agent. The Uintah Agency stretched from the eastern rim of the Great Basin to the eastern boundary of the Utah Territory and included both Utes and Shoshones.[16]

Major Rose took no active steps with respect to his sub-agency until the following February, perhaps because the other two Indian agents who had been assigned to the other agencies returned east in September with federal officials who had fallen out with the Mormons. The journal of George Washington Bean recounts Rose's visit to the Uinta Basin in early 1852, the first known Mormon reconnaissance of the area. Rose traveled to the basin with Bean, E.W. Van Etten, William D. Hendricks, Fayette and Farley Granger, and an Indian called Kilhuannuts. Bean recorded in his journal that "all agreed that the finest timber was here but not much land in a body suitable for cultivation." He stated "water privileges were excellent" and plenty of game was available in the form of "deer, antelope, rabbits, and sage hens."[17]

Mormons wanted to have a good relationship with the Indians; it was Brigham Young's stated policy to feed the Indians rather than

fight them. The Mormons tried to convert the Indians and encouraged them to become farmers. Although these early attempts were largely unsuccessful, Mormon efforts persisted.

Indians soon were caught in the middle of a struggle between Mormons and the federal government. Conflict arose over who should administer Indian policy. Federal officials sent to Utah Territory charged the Mormons with using their influence over the Indians against the interests of the federal government. Mormons did form alliances with the Indians and baptized them into the church; however, conflict between Mormons and Indians developed over occupation of land, the loss of game, and Indian involvement in the New Mexican slave trade.[18] The slave trade issue was particularly thorny. It was contrary to Mormon wishes but had been a lucrative, longstanding practice between Indians and Hispanic peoples of the West. At times Indians even traded their children to another tribe for a horse. However, plans were made with the child, beforehand, to escape and meet the parents at a designated place.[19]

Indians began to unite together in increasingly large groups to resist white invasion. Sowiette became an important leader, who was described by the Mormons as the "chief" of the western Ute bands. It is not known to which band he had originally belonged, but it was probably the Uinta-ats. He was a leader in the contacts the Ute bands had with each other. However, despite Sowiette's influence, men like Antarro, Kanosh and Black Hawk retained leadership over other groups of Indians.[20]

In the summer of 1853, while Wakara and his followers were camped on Spring Creek near Springville, an altercation over the slave trade led to the killing of one Indian and wounding of two others by Mormon settlers. The incident precipitated the Walker War, which lasted until May 1854 when Brigham Young and Wakara met at Chicken Creek to arrange peace. Wakara died less than a year later on 29 January 1855 and his brother Arapeen succeeded him as leader.

In 1854 Garland Hurt was appointed to the Utah Indian Agency. Soon after his arrival in 1855 he established three Indian farm-reservations. Hurt wanted to alleviate the destitute conditions of the Indians. He planned to develop the farms into permanent reservations. These federal farms were built upon a concept of Indian farms

which had been started in 1851 by Mormon church leaders. After some initial success, the federal Indian farm effort was interrupted by the Utah War in 1857.

In August 1861 Henry Martin was appointed Indian Agent for Utah Territory. He pressed for the establishment of an Indian reservation in the Uinta Basin to forestall Mormon plans to settle the area. The reservation would provide a home with good hunting and fishing prospects for Utah's Indians away from what he felt was the negative Mormon influence and would lessen the Indian threat to overland travel and the telegraph connection between California and the east. Martin's proposal was accepted by Secretary of the Interior Caleb B. Smith, who recommended to President Lincoln that the Uintah Reservation be established. Lincoln, no doubt preoccupied with war matters, wrote on the back of the envelope from Smith: "Let the reservation be established as recommended by the Secretary of the Interior."[21] He signed the executive order creating the reservation on 3 October 1861. Less than three weeks later Henry Martin resigned as Indian Agent; but during his three months in office his quick action was the catalyst that led to the establishment of the reservation.

Fighting erupted between Mormons and Utah Indians in 1863. Known as the Black Hawk War after Indian leader Black Hawk who directed a series of raids that captured hundreds of head of livestock, the conflict left more than fifty Mormon settlers dead and saw the abandonment of many southern Utah settlements. The territorial militia chased Black Hawk and his followers over much of central and southern Utah before the conflict ended.

On 5 May 1864 Congress passed a law confirming the 1861 executive order setting up the Uintah Reservation. The new Utah Indian superintendent, Oliver H. Irish, was ordered to negotiate with the Indians to move them to the Uintah Reservation. A council of Ute leaders was called at Spanish Fork Reservation on 6 June 1865. Brigham Young also attended. Aged leader Sowiette explained the Ute People "did not want to sell their land and go away; they wanted to live around the graves of their fathers."[22] Sanpitch also spoke against the treaty. However, advised by Brigham Young, the leaders signed, and the Indians were forced off their land.

This treaty provided that the Ute people give up their land in central Utah and move within one year to the Uintah Reservation. Sixty-two and one half cents per acre would be paid to the tribe for all of their land in Utah and Sanpete counties. However, the United States Congress did not ratify the treaty, and the government did not pay the promised annuity. Nevertheless, most of the Utah Utes were removed to the Uintah Reservation. Some moved willingly to fulfill the promises made in the treaty, while others were forced to move. All moved without compensation for their loss of land and independence.

Winters between 1864 and 1869 were severe, and early in that period Utes began raiding cattle herds to ward off starvation as their homeland and resources were diminishing rapidly. The deer population in the area also greatly declined. Many Utes perished during these years.[23]

In 1865 the Uintah Agency was built near the head of Daniel's Canyon and a farm was started. Both failed to survive the winter. Under Special Agent Thomas Carter an agency and farm were then built near present Tabiona where Indian families were located. Captain Pardon Dodds, the first Indian agent in Uintah County, moved the agency in 1868 from Tabiona to where Rock Creek flows into the Duchesne River. The location was in a narrow canyon and was exceptionally cold in the winter. The following year Dodds, Indian interpreter Dimick B. Huntington, and others selected Whiterocks as the new site for the agency. Ute leader Antero had earlier suggested this site because it was a center of Ute residence and trade.[24]

Agent Dodds's report in August 1869 to the U.S. Commissioner of Indian Affairs gave a description of the buildings which had been erected and further stated, "No finer site for an Indian farm could be found than our present location. Many thousands of acres of excellent land which can be irrigated at trifling expense are available, wood and timber are very convenient, and I have never seen finer grazing land for cattle. Thousands of cows could range through the mountains and valleys, keeping in excellent condition throughout the year, without hay during the winter."[25] Dodds began building up his own

herd of cattle, and after he resigned as Indian agent he brought his cattle to Ashley Valley and became the first settler there.

Dodds was replaced by George W. Graffam, who served until 1871. In one of his reports Graffam asserted: " . . . there are on the reservation, as near as I am able to ascertain, of all ages and sexes fifteen hundred Ute Indians; some of them quite industrious and intelligent, but sadly in want of education and moral teaching."[26] Graffam disliked his charges, his location, and his job. He did not complete his term, which was finished by Pardon Dodds.

John J. Critchlow was the next agent, serving from 1871 to 1883.[27] His impression of the agency, when he arrived, was anything but favorable. He reported some of the employees to be depraved and worthless, the Indians completely discouraged, and no food at the agency. Most of the Utes were out hunting when he arrived. Critchlow, a white hero to the Utes, spent twelve years building the town of Whiterocks and an excellent Indian agency. He also opened a school for Ute children.

The new agent moved with energy and foresight to serve the needs of his charges, but he ran into many obstacles. Douglas, a White River Ute leader, brought his band to the agency. He succeeded in persuading some Uintah Utes to quit farming. He ridiculed those who did farm, calling them "squaws," and succeeded in inducing some to leave with him for a visit to the White River Reservation (Meeker) where a council was held.

Trouble arose again in 1876 when the reservation Utes became alarmed over the surveying party which was sent to work out the reservation boundaries. They were further upset over rumors that the Uintah Reservation was to be opened to white settlement and that the LDS church was sending more families to settle the Ashley Valley.

Agent Critchlow communicated the fears and concerns of the Indians to Washington.[28] The white encroachment had driven them from their home in central Utah, and now their new home in the Uinta Valley was being threatened by another influx of whites. Friction developed between Critchlow and the Ashley Valley settlers. Accused of dishonesty, Critchlow rebutted with charges that Mormons were attempting to gain control of the agency by influencing the Indians.[29] Grazing encroachments began at this time. Some

settlers ignored the boundaries and others asked for more grazing privileges. In 1880 Critchlow wrote to E.A. Hayt, a Washington official: "If something is not done to effectually guard the reservation we will be overrun with stock."[30] Attempts to take the land from the Indians developed.

By 1879 the last major Ute hunting areas in Utah and Colorado had been invaded and depleted of game. The non-Indian population in Utah had grown to 145,000. Only then did the Utah Utes begin to remain year round near their agency at Uintah. Their numbers had decreased from about 4,500 in 1859 to about 800 in 1877.[31]

The year 1879 brought profound changes to the Uintah Agency. The White River Utes at Meeker, Colorado, under the leadership of Douglas, already distraught over promises not kept by the government, rose in rebellion against their agent, Nathan Meeker. The agent had provided them with wormy rations, insulted them, and tried to force them to become farmers.[32] The "last straw" came when the agents plowed up the Ute race track on Indian leader Johnson's plot of ground. Soldiers led by Major Thomas T. Thornburgh were attacked by 800 Utes led by Captain Jack.[33] Thornburgh and thirteen of his soldiers were killed along with many Utes. Meeker and six of his assistants were also killed and the white women and children on the reservation were taken hostage.

The violence was a handy excuse to remove the White River band from Colorado. In 1876 Colorado had been admitted to statehood. In 1878 silver had been discovered near Leadville, precipitating a rush of miners to the district who overran the Colorado Ute reservation lands searching for silver. Consequently, White River Utes, numbering approximately 700, were moved to the Uintah Reservation in the late summer of 1881 and became a part of the Uintah Reservation and Uintah Agency.[34]

The Uncompahgre band of Utes in western Colorado, innocent of any violence against the whites, was also forced to move to an adjacent piece of territory in the Uinta Basin and Uintah County following the Meeker Massacre and the signing of the agreement of 1880. This area embraced a tract of land to the east and south of the Uintah Reservation below Ouray lying east of the Green River. The new Uncompahgre Reservation was not formally established until 5

January 1882, when President Chester A. Arthur issued an executive order. A separate Indian agency was established in 1881 for the Uncompahgre Utes—about 1,450 in number—with headquarters at Ouray. The Department of War quickly established Fort Thornburgh at Ouray to maintain peace between the settlers of Ashley Valley and the relocated Colorado Indians and to ensure that the Uncompahgre and White River Utes remained on the two reservations. Fort Thornburgh was later moved to a location a few miles northwest of Vernal.[35]

The arrival of the White River and Uncompahgre Utes in the Uinta Basin brought new difficulties. Colorado Utes were upset about leaving their beautiful homeland and relocating to a desert. Unrest, dissatisfaction, and friction grew as provisions promised by Washington never arrived. A small group of White River Utes led by Colorow left the reservation and returned to northwestern Colorado to hunt. There they were accused of poaching, and several were killed. Closer to the reservations, tensions with Mormons and ranchers continued over boundary disputes, illegal livestock on the reservations, and the sale of alcohol to Indians by whites. Still, many Utes continued to improve their farms and in 1883 raised a large crop of hay and some splendid gardens along with 800 bushels of grain.[36]

In 1884 the Uintah agent, Elias Davis, reported on the socioeconomic conditions of the Northern Utes, as the Uintah, Uncompahgre, and White River bands were called. About one-third of their sustenance was received from farm products (mostly produced by agency farmers, not by the Utes), one-third from rations, and one-third from hunting. Practically all the cattle and sheep on the reservations were owned by only four or five family organizations. Large herds of horses, which were owned and treasured in common by the tribal members, grazed on the reservation. These horses were not a source of income but a link to earlier, more independent times.[37]

Contrary to the nineteenth-century image of the lazy Indian, Critchlow found them eager to perform the service of freighting. Critchlow had them transport supplies by wagon from Salt Lake City, Provo, Park City, and other railroad points. The Bureau of Indian Affairs supplied wagons and harnesses to assist, and Critchlow found it economical to have the Indians do their own freighting. In fact, the

Indians made such good teamsters that A.G. Barhydt & Company, a Whiterocks business enterprise, hired them to haul private goods from the railroad.[38]

Unrest within the bands continued, so the War Department decided to establish another fort on the reservation. In August 1886 Major F. W. Benteen arrived with black troops of the Ninth Cavalry. About 700 Utes went out to meet the army in an effort to prevent their coming onto the reservation. The Indians had presumed the soldiers would be white and were surprised to see the black soldiers with hair resembling that on a buffalo head.[39] Indian Agent Eugene E. White recalled how five Indians came riding as fast as their horses could carry them. One of the Indians began yelling, "Buffalo Soldiers! Coming! Maybe so tomorrow! . . . Don't let them come! . . . It's bad, very bad! You did not tell us that buffalo soldiers were coming!" He leaped from his pony and rushed up to the buggy where Agent White was sitting, rubbed his hand briskly over the agent's black coat sleeve and then over his face, and exclaimed, "All over black! All over black, buffalo soldiers!"[40]

Agent White calmed them down and construction of the fort proceeded. Following the establishment of Fort Duchesne, the Ute people were under constant military supervision. The soldiers served there for almost twelve years.[41] Additionally, the administration of Indian affairs was consolidated under one agency located there and the reservations were combined into one as the Uintah-Ouray Reservation.

The consolidated reservation was still threatened by the outside pressures of settlers to the east and west. Bert Seabolt and Sam Gilson, two of the earliest miners of the hydrocarbon known as Gilsonite, established mining claims and set up tents in the area but were informed by the Indian agent that they were trespassing on the reservation. With the help of an attorney and several influential Park City miners, the issue was elevated to Congress. On 24 May 1888 Congress provided for the removal of 7,040 acres of land which became known as "the Strip." Instrumental in the removal process were five Fort Duchesne officers who swore, in affidavits, that the land was "utterly worthless for any purpose to the tribes."

Congress stipulated that the Utes be paid $20 an acre for the

land. The transfer of land could not be made unless the Utes ratified the treaty—a most unlikely prospect.[42] The Utes were already angry as sheepmen and cattlemen were running stock illegally on the reservation, and prospectors had been digging for gold on Rock Creek before the Gilsonite miners had ever begun their trespass. Only the counsel of Indian leaders kept many of the Utes from taking hostile actions against the white trespassers.

Bert Seabolt called a council with the Indian agent, sub-agents, attorney R.C. Chambers, and Major Chafee, commanding officer of Fort Duchesne, to consider a solution to the problem. One of the sub-agents, Harry Clark, suggested giving the Indians whiskey, which was against the law. Attorney Chambers gave his opinion that no law would be broken if the liquor were distributed officially. Chafee condoned the action and said he could use troops to patrol the area and keep the peace but could not justify purchase of the liquor. Seabolt quickly volunteered to donate all the whiskey needed.

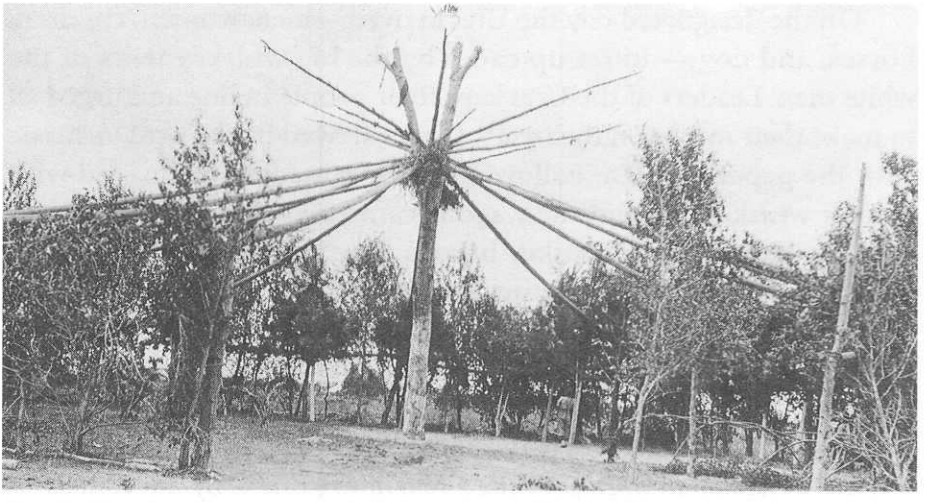
Two days in September 1888 were set for the treaty signing—with free whiskey for all. The signing would be on the site of the Gilsonite vein which would be staked out so the Indians could see what was being signed away. Word was passed to the Utes. A bent, gray-haired Indian woman came to see the land in question. Hank Stewart, who spoke the Ute language, interpreted for her. "See those stakes, old woman? That is the land your people are selling." The woman replied:

> Yes, I see the stakes and many other things. Once my people owned all this mountain country, from the village you call Denver in the east to the big lake of salt in the west, from the buffalo plains of the north to the land of the Navajos and Apache in the south. It took many days to ride across our country. You could not see across it, even from the highest mountain. But today I stand on this little hill and I can see all the land the Utes have left. You white men have taken all the rest. Even so, you come to me and ask, will you give me some more of what you have left? I look and I see what you want is worthless. Ponies cannot live here. The ground will not grow squash or corn or melons. Only the prairie dogs and rabbits use it. I will tell my people to sell it for twenty dollars an acre. But I will never agree to sell you any more at any price.[43]

On the designated day the Utes arrived—men, women, children, horses, and dogs—to set up camp by the big whiskey tents of the white men. Leaders of the Utes kept their people in line and urged all to make their marks on the treaty. Clerks arrived from Fort Duchesne with the papers to sign. Following them came wagons loaded with kegs of whiskey. Behind the wagons came two troops of the Ninth Cavalry. Heads of the whiskey barrels were broken with rifle butts. Tin cups holding at least a pint, with hooks for handles, were hung around the rim of the barrels. Tent flaps were thrown open and the Indians streamed into the tent. As each Ute entered, he signed his name or made his thumbprint and was given a cup of whiskey. By evening enough signatures had been secured to make the treaty good, but the Indians had been promised two days to sign. By noon the second day the signing was completed, but Seabolt told them to finish the whiskey. The night of the final treaty signing was quite a party, but the Indians gave the soldiers no trouble. On 22 October 1888 the Secretary of the Interior declared the lands attached to the public domain.[44]

As the difficulties of reservation life, coupled with the challenges brought to the Uinta Basin by white society, continued to affect the Ute people, many found a renewed sense of self-esteem in communication with their creator through the Sun Dance. Originating about 1700 among the Plains Indians, the Sun Dance has a Ute tradition of tagu-wuni, or "standing thirsty." Participation involves a four-day fast—abstaining from both food and liquid—conducted inside a lodge. The dance spread to most of the Plains tribes and became their major religious ceremony. It was used to ensure successful hunts or battles as well as health and power for individuals and for the group. As the Plains Indians moved onto reservations, Indian agents suppressed the dance. It was revitalized by the Wind River Shoshonis, who incorporated Christian symbols and ideas into the ceremony for the renewal of spirit and group togetherness.

Grant Bullethead (Uznah), a Uintah Ute who learned the Sun Dance at Wind River, held what was probably the first Sun Dance in the Uinta Basin at Whiterocks about 1890.[45] Of all the Ute dances—which included the Ghost Dance, Bear Dance, Turkey or War Dance, and Round Dance—the Sun Dance became the most important. Utes



Ute Indian Sun Dance corral. (UCLRHC collection)

travel many miles to attend the religious ceremony, which lasts several days and nights The details of the dance differ from year to year depending on the dreams of the man who is the "Sun Dance Chief."

As with other tribes, government officials tried to discourage the Sun Dance and all ceremonies. In 1912 Superintendent Jewell Martin charged that the ceremony caused the Utes to neglect their crops. Others complained it was making savages out of the Utes. By 1914 the commissioner of Indian affairs expressly forbade the Sun Dance, but the Ute people continued it, nevertheless. Today the dance is held in July or August at the Sun Dance grounds located four miles south and west of Whiterocks and four miles east of Neola, just off Highway 121. A twenty-acre plot on the south side of the road is used only for that purpose.[46]

The dance corral is built with a tall forked cottonwood center pole buried in the ground and standing between twelve and seventeen feet tall. A buffalo head or other ritual objects hang from it. This peeled center pole has been equated with God. Twelve cottonwood poles, each with a fork on top, are arranged in a circle and placed in the ground. These have been referred to as the twelve apostles.[47] The bottom end of a young pine lodge pole is placed in the fork of each post and secured. The other end of the pole is placed in the fork of the center pole and secured, making ridge poles. Between the outside

and center forks the ridge poles are stripped of limbs, but the top of the pine tree is left intact and sticks out beyond the middle fork.[48] Another pole is placed horizontally between the twelve vertical poles and a leafy wall of branches is placed from the ground up to the vertical poles surrounding the "corral" except for the ten-to-twelve-foot opening on the east end. Branches are woven into the circle of sturdy cottonwood posts which support the twelve straight young lodge poles, peeled and beautiful, like the spokes of a great wheel overhead. Their tips are interwoven above the forks of the center pole; and within these forks is lodged the sacred medicine bundle. The enclosure measures about sixty feet in diameter. Circling the interior of the enclosure is a series of individual stalls hugging the west wall and extending around the arc north and south. The east side of the enclosure is open. It faces directly toward the point where the rising sun will emerge above the low hills. The stalls are shallow enough to provide plenty of room for the dancing.

The dancer has a blanket in his stall to lie on when he needs to rest. Generally only Indians dance; however, in 1937 a white dancer participated but was soon exhausted and unable to complete the dance. In 1995 another white man participated. Individual dreams of the "chief" and dancers create much diversity of meaning for ritual objects associated with the dance. The dancer attempts to communicate with the Great Spirit. The dancers' families pitch teepees or erect shade lodges around the Sun Dance grounds to support the dancer both spiritually and physically by singing, drumming or silent participation.

After a ritual and four songs, it is time for the dance to commence, Indians beat rhythm on the drums accompanied by wordless singing or characteristic vocalizing of the notes. The men then strip to the waist wearing nothing but long breechcloths or aprons and dance slowly toward the center pole while blowing eagle-bone whistles. With elbows tucked against their sides and forearms extending straight out in front of them, trunks erect, eyes fixed on the medicine bundle at the top of the pole, feet together and knees slightly bent, the dancers go forward in a succession of swift, short jumps. When exhausted, they retire to the wall or stalls to rest but stay within the area for the duration of the dance with no food or water. This used

to be a night-long routine that continued until dawn, but night dancing has since been discontinued. When it is time for the sun to rise, the Indians stand in rows facing the east with the sun dance "chief" at the front of their ranks. When the sun comes up, they blow eagle-bone whistles, throw their arms in the air toward the rising sun, and rub sunlight into naked arms and shoulders. Their hands are reached out at arm's length again and again toward the sun followed by the stroking of their breasts and sides, their braids, their brows, and their cheeks with the blessings and power the sun brings to them.[49] It is a ritual of salutation to Father Sun.

In the past, dancers tortured themselves by running skewers through the muscles in their chest or back and swinging from thongs until the skewers broke.[50] When this first became illegal, some Indians held the Sun Dance in the mountains in secret. It has been said that some of the Indians in South Dakota still practice this procedure.

Another important ceremony is the Bear Dance. Utes have always claimed the Bear Dance, which is a spring dance or festival (Tamman Nacup), belongs to Uintah. Rock has been found in Ashley Valley showing the bear dancing as he is pictured on the Bear Dance flag at the present ceremonial. These pictographs are very old and show the notched sticks and resonating drum as used today.[51] The Indians have a variety of stories about the origin of the Bear Dance; all center around a young hunter who met a bear just coming from hibernation. The bear told him never to hunt bears and promised that if he would do the Bear Dance as the bear described the Ute people would always be successful hunters. The Bear Dance is a representation of the ways of the bear; it commemorates the coming of spring and expresses hope for a plentiful season.[52]

The Bear Dance is not performed according to a rigid set of rules. The dance is women's choice. The women sit on the south side of a large 150-foot arena, the men on the north. When the signal is given for a dance, each woman walks across to the men's side and points or waves her shawl to a certain man. She then takes her place in a line in the center of the arena. As soon as the music begins to roll and the chant throbs under the bare cottonwoods, the chosen men walk out and face their partners. The couples dance back and forth in time to the music, two bold steps forward, three mincing steps



Ute Indian Bear Dance. (UCLRHC collection)

backward, imitating the shuffling gait of the bear until the dancers are exhausted. The focus of the ceremony has changed today from hope for good hunting to concern for the well-being of the people.

Each spring Ute people come together in different communities for the festival. A Bear Dance corral is made, the resonator for the drum is set up, and the notched sticks prepared. This has occurred for generations. For this dance the Utes wear costumes decorated in brilliant colors of the rainbow with beads and porcupine quills. A wigwam village surrounds the arena. Songs are practiced and passed down from one generation to another.[53] They are sung to the accompaniment of the Bear Dance wooden resonator. The bone of the bears forepaw is rubbed over a notched stick called a morache, representing the scratching of the bear against a tree. The Bear Dance is a festival, with dancing for about three days and a feast on the fourth day. The Indians enjoy meeting friends, playing games, participating in the dance, and the coming from hibernation, feasting, and exchanging farewells. The Bear Dance is a great social factor in the life of the tribe.



Ute Indian Bear Dance musicians using rubbing sticks. (UCLRHC collection)

As the reservation Indians in the West continued to hold to their traditional cultural lifeways and increased pressure came from whites to obtain reservation lands, eastern reformers held a series of annual conferences in the late 1870s and early 1880s at Lake Mohonk, New York, to find a solution to the continued "Indian question." These Indian reform groups, including the Boston Indian Citizen Commission, convinced U.S. senator Henry L. Dawes, chairman of the Committee on Indian Affairs, to assimilate reservation Indians into white society. Under the Dawes Act of 1887, nearly all Indians living on reservations in the West were to be given up to 160-acre homesteads with additional land set aside for grazing of Indian livestock. Much Indian culture, including the Utes' Bear Dance, was to be eliminated. The lands not allotted to the Indians were to be opened to white development. The openings of the Uncompahgre Indian Reservation in 1898 and the Uintah Reservation in 1905 were in part fulfilling the Dawes Act. In Uintah County, the act only created more problems for the Utes with the loss of their reservation lands, the eventual loss of many individual allotments, and a century-long struggle over water.[54]

The pressure to open the reservation had increased through the 1890s. In 1891 the Uintah agency reported that "other thousands of acres of excellent land can only be utilized by a more expensive system of ditches than the Indians can or will afford" and recommended that irrigation companies have access to reservation water so that it might also aid the Indian farms.[55]

By the late 1890s, without much success in persuading the Uncompahgre Indians to accept allotments, preparations were made to open the Uncompahgre Reservation. Early in the spring of 1898 there was a rush of settlers to the southern part of Uintah County in anticipation of the reservation being opened. These trespassers on the Uncompahgre Reservation angered the Indians. The Uncompahgres were not yet ready for their reservation to be opened. They had not yet approved or accepted their allotments, nor had a survey of the reservation been completed as promised. However, allotments were given to the Uncompahgres, mostly on the Uintah Reservation, and the Uncompahgre Reservation was opened to white entry on 1 April 1898. For most homesteaders, the rush for Uncompahgre land was a bust. The land was dry, with limited agricultural possibilities. Only the Gilsonite mining interests found the opening of the Uncompahgre Reservation beneficial.

The real prize for whites was the Uintah Reservation. In January 1902 a *Deseret News* article expressed what was probably a majority opinion among Utah whites:

> There are valuable lands and mineral deposits within the boundaries of the reservation, which ought not to be excluded from occupation, cultivation, and development. . . . The time appears to be rapidly passing when large tracts of arable or mineral lands shall be kept as hunting grounds for roving bands of semi-savages.[56]

On 27 May 1902 Congress passed an act to open the reservation. The greatest obstacle to the opening, however, was the resistance of the Ute Indians. The provisions of the General Allotment Act under which the reservation was to be opened did not require Indians to consent to the allotment of their individual parcels. The act did require consent before unallotted land could be opened and sold to white settlers. The Utes steadfastly refused to give consent. In 1902 a

U.S. Supreme Court decision—that tribal approval was no longer necessary before reservations were opened and surplus lands sold—rendered Indian resistance meaningless. The court's reasoning was that once Indians were allotted their individual parcels, the remaining unallotted land was, in fact, public domain. Under this legal definition the opening of reservations to settlers required only an act of Congress, not tribal approval.[57]

Owning their own land was a reversal of the community life the Indians had previously enjoyed. On the large unpartitioned areas they had been free to hunt, farm, build their houses, take water from the flowing streams for irrigation purposes, cut firewood, and run their livestock without being hampered by observation of land section corners or other land subdivision. Due to Ute resistance, the task of allotting was not completed by the government until 18 July 1905.

One of the federal government's primary responsibilities under the reservation system had been to protect Indian resources. Their efforts, for the most part, were a failure. The taking of Indian land was an American tradition. The seemingly basic premise of U.S. Indian policy was the inevitability of cultural conquest. Loss of Indian resources deemed necessary for Indian "progress" was, however, not accepted policy. Before the Uintah Reservation was opened to white settlers, the federal government took steps to protect some Indian resources. These efforts continue to the present day. In addition to maintaining its protection of resources, federal responsibilities also continue in the administration of justice, education, and enculturation.

The federal government tried to establish a protective net for the Utes after the opening. It was the policy of Washington to deal with reservation boundaries individually when opening them to settlement. To what extent the intent was carried out on the Uintah Reservation is the subject of numerous court cases. The opening affected local, state, and federal relationships. When the orchestrated land rush was over and the filing of claims completed, what emerged were two separate communities—one white, one Indian. Indian allotments were strategically allocated along the Uinta, Whiterocks, and Duchesne rivers, near the eastern boundaries of the reservation.

Homesteaders selected lands primarily in the western two-thirds of the Uintah Reservation.

It was not long before the people who demanded the opening of the reservation began agitating for the remaining Indian claims. More important than the need for more land was the settlers' need for water. In an arid area like the Uinta Basin, the struggle for and over water is constant. Homesteads and townsites were permitted in areas where the only access to water was the Uinta and Whiterocks rivers. These were the same streams from which federal agents planned to irrigate Indian allotments. To aid the Utes in developing their water, Congress began appropriating funds in 1906 for a series of Indian irrigation canals in Uintah and Duchesne counties. In addition, Congress earlier withdrew land located on the upper reaches of the various streams in the county for the exclusive grazing of Indian livestock. The removal of this land from the public domain helped protect water sources for the Utes. Enlarging the Uinta National Forest in July 1905 also aided in the development of water for Indians and whites alike.[58]

A federal grazing reserve was established between the designated federal forest lands and individual Indian allotments. Its purpose was not only to provide exclusive grazing rights for Indians but also to protect Indian water rights. Strategic location of the federal reserve protected the upper reaches of the Uinta and Whiterocks rivers. The federal government consented to the crossing of federally owned lands.[59] Indian allotments were not similarly protected, and canal companies took these parcels to state court to condemn canal rights-of-way. Federal officials protested these state actions, but it was not until 1912 that the federal government was able to sue in federal courts to protect Indian rights. The following year, in the name of 277 Ute Indians, the federal government sued the Dry Gulch Irrigation Company to stop its use of Indian water. A U.S. Supreme Court ruling in 1914 put Indian allotments under the same restrictions as federal reserve lands.[60]

Indian water rights were not the only resources the federal government found itself protecting. The federal reserves created prior to the reservation opening also came into question. The Uintah, like many other reservations, was opened under the guidelines of the

General Allotment Act. The success of the federal legislation was predicated on the expectation that only those Indians "ready" for allotments would be placed under the act. That proved not to be the case—reservations were allotted and opened in response to outside economic forces. Those same economic forces that opened reservations now acted to open allotments and reserves for further exploitation. The populations of Uintah and the newly created Duchesne County were expanding rapidly. The demand for agricultural commodities pushed farms into areas of marginal production. In the Uinta Basin, crops of alfalfa and pasture replaced grain, as the raising of cattle and sheep for market replaced subsistence farming. The increased need for grazing lands multiplied the pressure on the remaining Indian lands.

Demands on Indian grazing resources changed from requests for agricultural reclassification to charges of "underuse," "misuse," and harassment against "accidental" trespass of white settlers' cattle on Indian reserves. Basin residents complained that the Indians' efforts to prevent trespass were inconvenient and damaging to local sheep and cattle interests. Non-Indian stock found on the grazing reserve were "arrested" and "taken into custody" at Fort Duchesne. The proposed remedy advocated placing the administration of the grazing reserve under the auspices of the Forest Service.

Albert Kneale, superintendent for the Uintah-Ouray Indian Agency in 1914, denied the harassment charges. He further pointed out that any administrative changes regarding Indian grazing land in the county would work against the Indians and in favor of white stockmen. Placing the land under the U.S. Department of Agriculture would require the Indians to compete directly for a limited number of grazing permits. In this situation, Kneale argued, the Indian would be at a definite disadvantage. Threats of administrative changes continued into the 1920s, but the likelihood of such changes faded rapidly after 1916.[61]

Individual Indian land allotments were protected generally from aggressive whites in the county. The Dawes Act provided a safeguard of twenty-five years against quick sales of individual allotments. Full title to individual Indian-allotted lands was not granted, generally, until the end of the twenty-five-year trust period, or when titles to

the allotments were granted by the Secretary of the Interior. The purpose of the trust period was to give each Indian sufficient time to develop his land and to educate him to the ways of the white man. Only a handful of Indian allotments were sold by Indians to whites in the county prior to 1914.[62]

The Uintah and White River Utes had refused to consent to the opening of their reservation. Even after the Supreme Court invalidated the General Allotment Act's consent requirements, the Utes still resisted. Special Indian Agent James McLaughlin was sent in 1903 to convince the Utes to take their allotments and to not interfere with the sale of the unallotted surplus lands. McLaughlin told the Utes nothing could stop the process—the reservation would be opened with or without their consent. After the meeting, a delegation of Utes traveled east to talk directly with President Roosevelt and the Secretary of the Interior. The message received was the same: the Uintah Reservation would be opened up and the Utes should not stand in the way of progress.[63]

The Utes had failed to prevent allotment, but they continued to resist its conclusion. Many Indians of the White River Band refused to select allotments or to live on allotments selected for them. Despite the resistance, allotments were made and the surplus land was opened to settlement in 1905. As homesteaders poured in, a large body of Indians left the reservation. Under the leadership of Red Cap, about 400 Utes, most of them from the White River Band, left the reservation and started north toward the Sioux Reservation.[64] This odyssey was an expression of resistance. Utes realized they could not prevent the opening of the reservation nor the selling of their land, but they also realized they could not be prevented from leaving and going where they pleased.

At first the government provided for the Indians in South Dakota, but soon insisted that they care for themselves. The Indians were told that if they wished a change of climate and surroundings, the government was willing to give them a chance to do as they pleased in these respects, but it insisted that they should, like all other citizens, pay for their own support. Some Indians were offered jobs on the Santa Fe Railroad at good wages, including free house rent, free water, and free fuel. They declined, stating, "We are government

people, not like the Sioux—the Sioux have to work but the government will feed us." As the government began cutting rations, a few of the Utes finally took jobs but had no way to care for their herd of ponies. It was suggested they sell the ponies and use the money for the betterment of their own condition. That did not suit them. After two years of near starvation, the Utes finally agreed to return to the reservation. It cost the government $9,920 to bring them home. New wagons and teams were purchased for the Indians and the government supplied them with the food for the return trip. This journey of 1,000 miles took 101 days. Many of the Indians had perished during the two years.[65]

Ute Struggle for Autonomy in the Twentieth Century

Indian agents of the 1880s and 1890s were pleased with what they saw as "Great Progress in the condition of these Indians as to their mental progress and material improvements."[66] Yearly agency reports listed the number of Indians who wore "white" clothing and who engaged in agriculture (or other "civilized" pursuits). It also listed those Indians living in houses and those who could speak or write English. Some Indians, one agent noted, were even cutting their hair. The 1905 opening of the Uintah Reservation came faster than the agents expected—less because of the glowing progress reports than because of outside economic and political forces.

Once the issues of justice and access to resources were more or less clarified and the overt hostility of the Utes had subsided, settlers' perceptions of Indians began to improve. Many homesteaders depended on federal development of Indian resources as an important source of revenue. Construction of a massive Indian irrigation system in 1906 put needed money into local whites' pockets. Federal Indian appropriations for schools and bridges as well as other capital projects benefited the white economy as much if not more than it did the subsistence economy of the Indians.[67] In 1911 the Utes received the first of a number of financial settlements for lands that had been taken from them in Colorado and Utah, and this boosted the local economy. The competition for the limited water resources and land irritated the relationship between the Utes and whites, but generally

non-Indians settled into what was perceived to be a suitable arrangement.[68]

In 1913 local federal agents began pursuing policies that created unrest among the Utes. Indian ponies were rounded up from the grazing reserve and removed to make room for the federally sponsored Indian cattle business. While neighboring whites agreed that the raising of cattle was better suited to the "Indian's instinct," they did not approve of the government's heavy-handed approach or the thought of federally supported competition.[69] Federal agents also wanted to eliminate the Sun Dance because it was believed to create hostility. A local editorial complained about the suppression of the Indian's right to worship God as he pleased. Many local residents attended the Ute dances and saw nothing dangerous or morally degrading about the festivities. The Utes continued to hold dances.[70]

Such initiatives antagonized the Utes. The controversy was not just about the right to dance or keep Indian ponies. It also involved the reduction of food rations. Federal agents felt the Indians worked more aggressively toward agricultural self-support when coerced to do so. Cutting rations had been talked about for years and had been used to enforce school attendance, but it had never been applied so extensively. The Indians began to complain and make threats to leave the reservation and go north again, as they had eight years earlier. County officials went onto the reservation to investigate stories of "starving Indians." Petitions were sent by local residents to Congress complaining about the situation. A local editorial pointed out the federal policy of cutting rations would not work because the Utes were at the bottom of the social ladder and it would take time for them "to emerge from the darkness."[71] White residents did not oppose all federal coercive efforts, especially if the action protected white interests. White residents wanted the federal government to continue funding Indian projects but were opposed to the goals of certain projects such as irrigation.[72]

The Ute Indians moved hesitantly and under protest from community life to individual ownership of land. When the reservation was opened to homesteading in 1905, the need for continued federal involvement did not end, nor was it expected to be ended in the immediate future. The experience of earlier reservation openings

proved that point; but how the federal government would be involved after the 1905 opening was not clear. Guidelines were available but many were contradictory. The intent of the General Allotment Act was to remove reservation boundaries and assimilate Indians into the surrounding white culture. On the other hand, the act also required states to assume the previous federal responsibilities of administering justice, providing for education, and supporting the cultural progress of Indians. It became obvious the process was not working. When Indian land patents followed allotment, Indian land often was lost quickly.

The creation of a poor, landless ethnic group worried both federal and local officials. It was the expectation of the General Allotment Act that, as citizens, Indians would protect themselves through the ballot. Few Indians from the former reservation ever voted. State and local governments did not want or could not afford the responsibility of bringing the Indians into the mainstream of organized white society. What evolved was a delineation of federal, state and local responsibilities. It was a clarification of jurisdiction forged through competition and compromise, particular to the history and events that preceded the opening of the Uintah Reservation. Even before the reservation opened in 1905, the federal government acted to ensure a continued federal presence by the creation of federal reserves. These reserves were located in such a manner as to protect the water resources of the Utes. With the Burke Amendment in 1906 and subsequent Supreme Court rulings, individual Indian allotments still held in trust and the Indians living on those tracts were again subject to federal jurisdiction. Federal authority in dealing with the Utes continued to extend outward.

The evolution of this expansion often has been interpreted as a federal intent to continue reservation boundaries after opening. Events following 1905 challenge this interpretation. What appears to have happened instead was a "working out" of the particulars over time. The inability or refusal of state and local governments to assume those responsibilities prompted federal remedies that, in the case of the Uintah Reservation, were generally acceptable to local residents but not always to the Utes.

By 1918 a large number of Indians were given free patents to

their lands and were allowed to sell them. They would no longer remain wards of the government and would take on the status of full citizenship. Many of the Indians sold their allotments to whites, and the reservation began to resemble a checkerboard, with individual parcels of privately owned property surrounded by reservation land. To remedy this problem, the tribe later began a land consolidation plan that provided them with the first chance to buy the allotments from individuals who wanted to sell their property. The tribe still has authority to purchase any land that is available for sale within its boundaries and plans to gain back some of the land lost earlier in the century.[73]

Affairs of the Ute people became critical. Homes built upon allotments for the most part were abandoned or allowed to deteriorate. On 18 June 1934 the Wheeler-Howard Self-Government Act, known as Indian Reorganization Act (IRA), passed Congress, and a new era began for the Utes and Indians across the country. They were given greater authority to govern their own affairs, and certain powers were bestowed by a charter on their tribal governing body. These powers included the right to levy taxes upon their own members, to regulate law and order, to charter subordinate organizations for economic purposes, to regulate domestic relations, to employ legal counsel when necessary, and to borrow money as a corporate enterprise. Under their own government, the Indians became more interested in irrigating the land, grazing cattle, and granting oil and gas leases, resulting in income for the tribe.

By 1983 a business committee composed of two elected members from each of the three bands, headquartered at Fort Duchesne, had been established as the primary governing body on the reservation. The tribe has some sovereign powers apart from either state or federal governments, and the business committee is ultimately responsible for the management of tribal properties. The Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), an agency of the U.S. Department of the Interior, is formally charged with ensuring that the reservation is prudently managed.

The reservation is as rich in minerals as it is in history. One of the main responsibilities of the governing entities is to manage this



Wong Sing standing with Indian ladies in front of his merchandise store at Fort Duchesne. (UCLRHC Collection)

great supply of minerals in a manner that preserves the integrity of the land while providing a bountiful future for the children.

The Indians and whites still do not enter into full working relationships either socially or economically with each other. There is a small group of mixed bloods, who received a one-time settlement in the 1950s when their membership in the tribe was terminated. They are on the fringes of both groups and are presently seeking more recognition from the tribe. By 1890 a total of 1,821 Utes lived on the reservation, including 833 Uintahs and White Rivers and 988 Uncompahgres. These figures represented an approximate 800 increase in population since the reservation was first established.[74] By 1934 the ratio of Indians to whites within the basin was about one to ten. The 1990 census count of 22,211 people in Uintah County included 2,335 Indian tribal members. The estimated 1993 county population was 23,810, of which 3,103 were of the Ute Tribe, giving a one to eight ratio.[75]

The history of the Utes—their struggles to maintain their unique culture and autonomy as they interact with their neighbors in a constantly changing society—is one of the most intriguing facets of Uintah County's rich history. It is a dynamic story still unfolding. The future promises many more unique chapters.

ENDNOTES

1. Warren L. D'Azevedo, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians: Great Basin* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1986), 337.

2. Fred A. Conetah, *A History of the Northern Ute People* (Ft. Duchesne, UT: Uintah-Ouray Ute Tribe, 1982), 25–30.

3. Julian H. Steward, *Ute Indians I: Aboriginal and Historical Groups of the Ute Indians of Utah* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1974), 37–39. Also see S. Lyman Tyler, "The Myth of the Lake of Copala and Land of Teguayo," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 20 (1952), and D'Azevedo, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, 354.

4. John D.Barton, "Buckskin Entrepreneur: Antone Robidoux's Fur Trade among the Utes" (unpublished manuscript held at Uintah County Library Regional History Center, Vernal), 11–12. At that time, Comanches were located north of the Uinta Mountains in the Fort Bridger area and to the east near the present Utah-Colorado state line.

5. According to Ute historian Clifford Duncan, the word "Comanche" is sometimes misused. Because in the Ute language it means "different," it

could refer to other bands of Utes. Duncan said a Ute going to another area might be called a Komanchi, meaning a "stranger." Interview with Clifford Duncan at Uintah County Library, 7 August 1995.

6. Steward, *Ute Indians*, 12–13.

7. Notations on Miera map. See Ted Warner, ed., *The Dominguez-Escalante Journal* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1995).

8. Steward, *Ute Indians*, 23.

9. Arrell Morgan Gibson, *The American Indian: Prehistory to Present* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 78.

10. According to the *Ute Bulletin*, 5 September 1995, the Utes never had "chiefs." Leaders such as Ouray, Colorow, and Saponeese were considered "Avought Datwdtch," the spokesman or mouthpiece of their respective bands.

11. Shirley Daniels to June Stewart of Jensen, Utah, 1 August 1974, Uintah County Library Regional History Center (hereinafter UCL).

12. Kevin T. Jones and Kathryn L. MacKay, *Cultural Resources Existing Data Inventory: Vernal District, Utah* (Salt Lake City: Bureau of Land Management and University of Utah Archaeological Center, 1980), 58.

13. Steward, *Ute*, 14–17.

14. Conetah, *History of Northern Ute People*, 37.

15. Kerry Ross Boren, "The Curse of the Lost Rhoades Mines," *Southpoint*, December 1992, 3–5; Gale R. Rhoades and Kerry Ross Boren, *Footprints in the Wilderness: A History of the Lost Rhoades Mine* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1971), 65–73.

16. *Inventory of the County Archives of Utah: Uintah County, Number 24* (Ogden, UT: Historical Records Survey, 1939), 14–16.

17. Diary of George W. Bean, February 1852, 5, transcription, Utah State Historical Society, Salt Lake City; Gary Lee Walker, "A History of Fort Duchesne, Including Fort Thornburgh: The Military Presence in Frontier Uinta Basin, Utah," Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1992, 1:14.

18. Conetah, *History of the Northern Ute People*, 39.

19. Told to the author by Clifford Duncan, 8 August 1995, at the Regional History Center, Vernal.

20. Conetah, *History of the Northern Ute People*, 78–79.

21. Henry Martin to William P. Dole, 2 September 1861, National Archives.

22. Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report* 1878, 298.

23. Floyd O'Neil, "Indian-White Relations in Utah" (paper read in Uinta Basin History Lecture Series, 25 October 1978, typescript held in Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 1626).

24. Jones and MacKay, "Cultural Resources Inventory," 61.

25. Letter by Mable Haub (grade school teacher at Tridell School in 1947) received from the office of Indian Affairs, Chicago, 26 May 1947 (copy in Uintah County Library Regional History Center).

26. Floyd A. O'Neil, "The Reluctant Suzerainty: The Uintah and Ouray Reservation," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 39 (Spring 1971): 132.

27. Dates of Indian agents were taken from *The Ute People An Historical Study*, comp. June Lyman and Norma Denver (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1970), 120.

28. Critchlow to E.A. Hayt, 8 January 1878, microfilm roll 906, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

29. Critchlow to E.A. Hayt, 15 February 1879, microfilm roll 906, National Archives. Washington, D.C.

30. Critchlow to E.A. Hayt, 8 March 1880, microfilm roll No. 906, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

31. Joseph G. Jorgensen, *The Sun Dance Religion: Power for the Powerless* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), 37–38.

32. Luke Duncan, cited in an article by Heather McGregor, "Ute Battlefield Monument Battle of Milk Creek 1879," published in *Ute Bulletin*, 5 September 1995.

33. Ibid.

34. Walker, "A History of Fort Duchesne," 1:35.

35. The town of Ouray was named for a leader of the Uncompahgre Utes.

36. George P. Malanson, "The Rise and Fall of the Uintah Valley Indian Reservation: Perception and Policy," in *Geology and Energy Resources, Uinta Basin of Utah*, ed. M. Dane Picard (Salt Lake City: Geological Association, 1985), 13.

37. Jones and MacKay, *Cultural Resources Inventory*, 63.

38. Critchlow to R.E. Trobridge, 25 December 1880, BIA, letters received, DNA, RG 75; Price to E. Seward, 8 July 1881, Finance Division; Price to Critchlow, 8 June 1881. Finance Division; Barhydt to Commissioner, 5 July 1886, *Interior Department Report*, 1881, II, 214, 1882, 11, 210 National Archives, Washington, D.C.

39. The buffalo soldiers of the Ninth Cavalry had a reputation of being ferocious. Clifford Duncan, Ute historian, stated from what his grandfather told him the Utes did not know about the buffalo soldiers prior to their coming to the reservation. In fact, Clifford stated his grandfather had told him a story about some Indians capturing one black man and putting him in the water and scrubbing him trying to get the black off and trying to

make his hair straight thinking he was a painted Indian. Interview with author, 8 August 1995.

40. E.E. White, *Experiences of a Special Agent* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965) quoted in Ronald G. Coleman, "The Buffalo Soldiers," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 47 (1979): 424–25.

41. Conetah, *History of the Northern Ute People*, 117.

42. U.S. Congress, House, 50th Cong., 1st sess., 1888, House Report 791, Serial 2600, 2; Reed Morrill, "A Historical Study of Ashley Valley and its Environs," Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1937, 178.

43. George E. Stewart, "The Day the Utes Helped Themselves to Free Whiskey, *Salt Lake Tribune Home Magazine*, 29 September 1968.

44. Walker, "History of Fort Duchesne," 1:229.

45. Orson Hall was told by Unca Sam that the Sun Dance was first held in the Uinta Basin on Brush Creek Mountain near the Colton Ranger Station. Unca Sam showed him where the Sun Dance corral was located, and the well-worn Sun Dance circle was still plainly visible, undated *Vernal Express* article located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

46. Jorgensen, *The Sun Dance Religion*, 20–21.

47. Wilson Johnson, "The Origin of the Sun Dance: A Christian Version," Civil Works Administration Oral Histories Project 1933–34, (unpublished manuscript of the Colorado State Historical Society, copy held in the Uintah County Library, Regional History Center, Vernal), 94.

48. This is what the author observed at the 1995 Sun Dance. However, a photograph located in the Regional History Center taken in the early days of the arena or corral shows the limbs of the trees peeled with no leafy branches.

49. Karl E. Young, "Sun Dance at Whiterocks, 1919," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 40 (1972): 241.

50. Lyman and Denver, *Ute People*, 107.

51. Albert B. Reagan, "Preliminary Notes on the Archeology of Ashley Valley and Environs" (unpublished report for Laboratory of Anthropology, Santa Fe, New Mexico; copy located in UCL), 46.

52. "Bear Dance" files, Ute Tribal Museum at Bottle Hollow.

53. Early dancers used a hollow log, but now a wooden box is built with a piece of metal across the top with a notched stick; Duncan interview.

54. Craig Woods Fuller, "The Rush for Land: Opening of the Uintah Indian Reservation," *The Outlaw Trail Journal* 2 (1992): 2–3; Conetah, *History of the Northern Ute People*, 120–30.

55. R. Waugh, Report of Agent in Utah, *Annual Report of the*

Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior, 1891 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Interior, 1891), 436–40.

56. *Deseret News*, 23 January 1902.

57. General Allotment Act (GAA) became law on 8 February 1887; see U.S. Statutes at Large 24, 388–91. For a contemporary discussion of GAA contents, see James B. Thayer, "The Dawes Bill and the Indians," *Atlantic Monthly* 61:315–22.

58. The Uinta National Forest Reserve was established in 1897 by President Grover Cleveland. In 1908 the Ashley National Forest was established from the eastern section of the Uinta National Forest.

59. Concern over protecting Indian water rights was initially brought up by Cyrus B. Babb in his report on the Uintah Reservation (1902), cited by O'Neil, *A History of the Uintah-Ouray Ute Lands*, 33: "Babb suggested that it was better to allot Indians on adjoining sections . . . rather than in detached areas . . . the whites being allowed to take up intermediate sections." These concerns were carried on by Hall in letters to the Indian commissioner (17 October 1904, 23 January 1905, and 29 March 1905). In letters to Secretary of the Interior (24 April 1905 and 15 June 1905), W.H. Code said he was going to file protests with the state for water claimed by whites which he felt was needed by Indians.

60. W. H. Code to Caleb Tanner, Utah State Engineer (23 May 1905), outlined the federal approach to putting the water rights of the Indians to beneficial use. Assistant Attorney General Frank Campbell to the Secretary of the Interior (11 May 1905) explained in reference to an earlier letter of W.H. Code that "Eminent Domain" could be used to obtain rights-of-way for canals across Indian allotments (*25 U.S.C.A. 357*). Condemnation suits were brought before state courts—all were decided in favor of the white settlers. Records of the cases are located in the Records Room, Uintah County Courthouse, Vernal, Utah. See *#307 South Park Canal Company v. Nero, et al.* (January 1910); *#310 The Whiterock's Irrigation Company v. O-ah-Rum, et al.* (January 1910); *#321 Colorado Park Irrigation v. John Harris, et al.* (July 1908). U.S. Government filed suit in 1913, see *Vernal Express*, 31 October 1913. For history of cases, see *U.S. v. Dry Gulch Irrigation, et al.* (10 August 1916); U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report (1916)*; 42; *Annual Report (1918)*, 99; *Annual Report (1919)* 43; *Annual Report (1922)*. The U.S. Circuit Court had ruled in 1912 that the U.S. had the right to sue in its own courts to protect the rights of Indians, *Vernal Express*, 22 November 1912, 23 July 1920.

61. *Vernal Express*, 2 December 1910, 22 September 1922, 16 January 1914, and 24 December 1915; Albert Kneale to Indian Commissioner, 31 January 1916; *Duchesne Record*, 18 March 1916.

62. U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual*

Reports (1911 and 1918). In 1911, 480 acres were sold; in 1918, 1,452 acres were sold; *Vernal Express*, 5 May 1911, 1 August 1913, 26 September 1913, and 12 February 1915 verify land transactions. These sales do not represent all land sold by Indians, Duchesne County Patent Book #3 records Indian land sales beginning in 1915. Only six fee patents were granted to Indians up to 1918.

63. Agent E.G. Hall to Indian Commissioner Francis Leupp, 15 August 1904, 24 February 1905, and 15 May 1905. James McLaughlin, Minutes of Council Held with the Ute Tribe 14 May to 23 May 1903 at Whiterocks Utah; U.S. Department of the Interior, Indian Affairs Office, *Annual Report (1906)*; *Vernal Express*, 21 November 1903 and 24 October 1913; *Uintah Chieftain*, 2 December 1901; Gottfried Land, *A Study in Cultural Contact and Cultural Change: The Whiterocks Ute Transition* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Anthropology Department, 1953), 14–15

64. Floyd O'Neil, "An Anguished Odyssey: The Flight of the Utes, 1906–1908," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 36 (Fall 1968): 315; U.S. Department of Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Reports (1907 and1908).*

65. O'Neil, "An Anguished Odyssey," 315; *Vernal Express,* 16 October 1908.

66. U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report (1893)*, 316; see also *Annual Reports (1902 and 1903).*

67. Floyd O'Neil and Kathryn L. MacKay; *A History of the Uintah-Ouray Ute Lands* (Salt Lake City: American West Center Occasional Papers, 1982), 34, implies that the reason the Uintah Irrigation project was constructed was to satisfy white settlers, not Indian allottees. They point out that of the 80,000 acres eventually irrigated by the project's twenty-two canals, 25,000 acres were sold to non-Utes

68. *Vernal Express*, 14 April 1906, 15 September 1910, and 7 November 1913.

69. *Vernal Express*, 19 June 1913 and 13 October 1913.

70. *Vernal Express*, 27 June 1913, 10 July 1914, 13 July 1914, 7 July 1916, and 28 July 1916.

71. *Vernal Express*, 30 January 1914, 27 February 1914, and 6 March 1914.

72. *Vernal Express*, 23 July 1920.

73. Heather H. McHugh, "The Ute Indian Tribe: Preserving the Integrity of the Land," *Shale Country* (Summer 1983): 19.

74. Walker, "History of Fort Duchesne," 1:238.

75. Obtained from Bureau of Indian Affairs vital statistics department at Fort Duchesne, Utah, 1 February 1993. Some of the information in this chapter was provided by Robert Hugie.

3

"Holding the World Together"

ESTABLISHING SETTLEMENTS

Three distinct yet sometimes overlapping groups have shaped the settlement history of Uintah County: Ute Indians; Mormons—members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS); and non-Mormons, or "gentiles" as they were labeled by Mormons.

Soon after the Mormons arrived in the Great Salt Lake Valley in 1847, settlements were established to the north and south. The Mormons initially based their perception of the Uinta Basin on early explorations and penetrations by Spaniards and fur trappers.[1] Most of these early travelers, including Domínguez and Escalante, Rufus Sage, and John C. Fremont, wrote about the area's good settlement potential; yet little attention was given to settlement of the Uinta Basin until 1861, when a proposed overland stagecoach route from Denver to Salt Lake City through present-day Uintah County prompted LDS church officials to call thirty missionaries on 25 April 1861 to settle "Uintah Valley." These missionaries met on 27 August in the church historian's office. Three were excused and eleven new names were added. Church president Brigham Young said, "If I had called for volunteers on Sunday I could have obtained 200 names, but

this I did not wish to do. I have been requested several times to permit a settlement in that valley, but I have never wished to do so until now; but now I want a settlement there and I wish to pick the company. The Gentiles will take possession of that valley, if we do not, and I do not wish them to have it. Antarro, the chief of the Pampe Utes wished me to make a settlement there."[2]

Before settlement was undertaken, as was customary, the valley was to be explored and in this case a road surveyed and constructed. On 29 August another meeting was held at the president's schoolhouse with Brigham Young, Daniel Wells, and Wilford Woodruff attending. A few more names were added to the group, and several persons volunteered to start with the surveyor on 2 September; six volunteered to start a week later to help make a road to Uintah. The majority believed they would be ready to start in two or three weeks with the main body or when Brigham Young designated. Young said he considered 23 September the time when the general camp should start. On 25 September 1861 the *Deseret News* reported, "the exploring and surveying party that started for Uinta Valley on the 2nd, and also the road makers who followed after them on the 9th inst., have returned with a very unfavorable report in relation to that part of the Territory." The report went on to say, "The area was one vast contiguity of waste, and measurably valueless, excepting for nomadic purposes, hunting grounds for Indians and to hold the world together."[3] Young canceled the settlement plan after receiving this information and recalled the missionaries.

During this time, the new Indian agent, Henry Martin, learned of the Mormons' planned settlement and proposed instead that the Uinta Basin be set aside as an Indian reservation. On 3 October 1861 the Uintah Indian Reservation was established by executive order of President Abraham Lincoln.

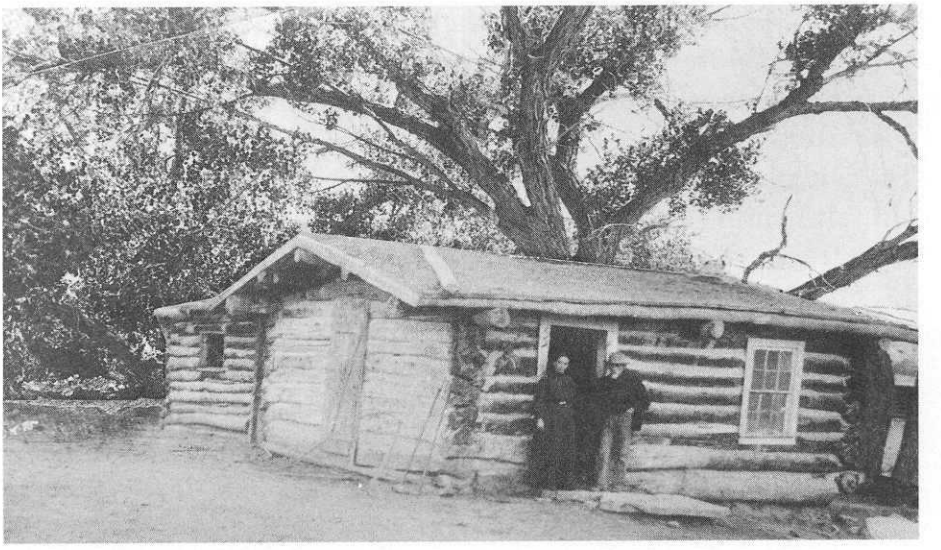
Ute Indians were potential allies of the Mormon church, as well as potential converts. Agents and superintendents of the Indian Affairs Office in Utah Territory worked to minimize the church's influence with the Indians and also to weaken the church's political control of Utah. The federal government established reservations, while the church attempted to convert Indians and win their confidence on and off the reservations. Indians were pawns in the political

conflict.[4] In the 1850s the Mormons began to try to teach the Indians in Utah to farm, an undertaking which generally was unsuccessful. Indian agent Garland Hurt had set up two Indian farms—one at Corn Creek and another at Spanish Fork—and told the Utes yet another would be set up in Uinta Valley. Superintendent of Indian affairs Jacob Forney, who replaced Brigham Young, stated in a letter to the federal commissioner of Indian affairs that this was absurd since there was no road to the Basin.[5]

In 1863 Ute Indians occupied arable land on the Mormon Spanish Fork and Sanpete reservations. Amos Reed, acting territorial governor and former Indian agent, visited the Uinta Basin and found excellent grazing and considerable tillable land. He recommended that the Indians be moved to the basin in order to open the Spanish Fork and Sanpete reservations to white settlers.[6] This removal would fulfill a plan outlined in 1861 by Martin's predecessor, James D. Doty, to have the Indians "removed far away from their old homes—quite beyond the influence of those who may poison their minds against the authority of the federal government."[7]

Captain Pardon Dodds was the first Indian agent in the Uinta Basin and set up the agency at Rock Creek near Tabiona. In 1868 Whiterocks was selected as the permanent site for the agency, and on Christmas Day Dodds arrived there with seven agency employees. Most of the Uintah Utes soon were moved to the Whiterocks Agency. Dodds began pushing the Indians towards farming. J.H. Head, Utah Indian superintendent, wrote to the new commissioner, E.S. Parker, stating, "Agent Dodds has succeeded even beyond my most sanguine expectations in interesting the Indians in farming operation."[8]

John Wesley Powell was also impressed when he stayed at the agency for four days during his 1869 expedition and noted that wheat, potatoes, turnips, melons, and other vegetables were being raised on small patches of ground. Later visitors, however, such as A. H. Thompson of Powell's 1871 expedition, were not impressed. Thompson wrote that "the employees at the Agency plough the land, furnish seed, dig the irrigating ditches, cut the grain; in fact do all the work that requires the use of tools." While the Indians did some irrigating, the men made the women do the work while they raced horses or loafed around the agency. After being at the agency a few



Mr. and Mrs. Pardon Dodds with the first cabin built in Ashley Valley. (UCLRHC collection)

days, Thompson further stated, "My impressions of the Indians, the Agency, are unchanged. The agency as at present conducted it is a cheat, and a swindle." Thompson concluded, "The Indians do not make good agriculturalists."[9] The agency remained at the Whiterocks location for over forty years, until 1912.

By 1869 a white settlement, the first in Uintah County, was established at Whiterocks. The settlement was known as Uintah Valley until 1895 when the name was changed to Whiterocks as a post office was reopened that year. Whiterocks remains part of the present Uintah-Ouray Indian Reservation.

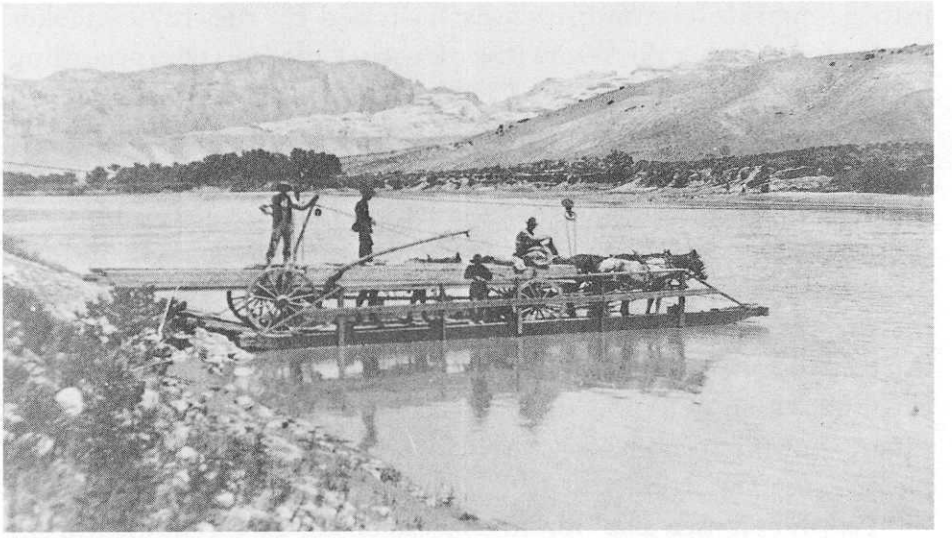
Agent Pardon Dodds obviously recognized the agricultural potential of the Uinta Basin. Upon completing his term as Indian agent, he settled near the reservation in what was to become known as Ashley Valley. He and Morris Evans gathered their personal cattle herd from the reservation, drove the animals east, and settled on the north side of Ashley Creek in 1873. John Blankenship came about the same time and settled on the south side of the creek. With the help of these men, Dodds built the first house and opened it as a trading post for trappers and Indians.

This beginning colonization of Uintah County was not by

Mormon pioneers like most of Utah, but rather by single men who had worked at the Uintah Indian Agency in Whiterocks, as well as by cattlemen, cowboys, drifters seeking refuge from criminal or otherwise troubled lives, and non-Mormon families establishing homes. The settlement became known as Ashley, and it was the first town in Uintah County except for the Indian agency and settlement at Whiterocks. The first white woman did not arrive in Ashley until 1876, although Indian agent John Critchlow's wife, Nellie Ayes Critchlow, had come to Whiterocks in 1874, making her the first white woman in Uintah County. The town of Ashley was about four miles northwest of present-day Vernal. The Ashley post office was created on 27 December 1878. It operated until 17 November 1899; residents then received their mail at Vernal.[10]

In 1877 Teancum Taylor, a Mormon polygamist, settled one wife in Ashley and prompted the other wife to take out a claim near the big spring in Mountain Dell, which later became known as Dry Fork. Taylor wanted other families near his Dry Fork family, so he offered land and water rights to entice others to move to the area. The settlement prospered and soon there were twenty-seven families, a school, and a post office. By 1886, when the town of Ashley became too populous for Taylor, he moved the family living in Ashley to Deep Creek west of Dry Fork.

Jensen, which lies on the Green River, was settled in 1877 when Isaac Burton, Sr., with his thirteen children arrived on 17 November and settled for the winter on Ashley Creek near Stewart Lake. The following year the family moved to the junction of Brush Creek and Green River. Two weeks after the Burton family arrived a group of Mormon polygamists led by Thomas Bingham settled on what was later called Burns's Bench. Later another group settled south of present Jensen at the mouth of Ashley Creek where the Burtons had spent the winter, and a town was begun in that area. This settlement was called Riverdale; a LDS ward was organized there in 1885. A post office request for Riverdale was denied; however, a later request was approved with the name of Jensen. Other families settled farther north along the river where the farming land was much better. Eventually the center of the settlement was moved to the present site of the Jensen bridge.



First ferry boat crossing the Green River at Jensen, Utah. (UCLRHC collection)

The Burtons began the first ferry on the Green River in 1881 at the mouth of Brush Creek; they later moved the ferry down to the new town of Jensen at the present bridge site. The ferry sold in 1890 to Skippsy Johnson and was later purchased by Albert Snow and his sons in 1895. Lars Jensen constructed another ferry in 1882 south of the present Jensen bridge, near the mouth of Ashley Creek. This ferry was later taken down the river in an ice jam. In 1911 a bridge was built across the Green River at Jensen. This bridge was replaced in 1933 at the time U.S. Highway 40 was constructed. In 1993 a new bridge was built north of the old metal bridge which was then hauled away for scrap metal. The ferries and the bridges played an important role in the development of the Uinta Basin. The town of Jensen near the bridge has died out, with the post office currently a considerable distance to the west. West of the post office new businesses are locating around the turnoff to the dinosaur quarry. A new visitors center is scheduled for this area.

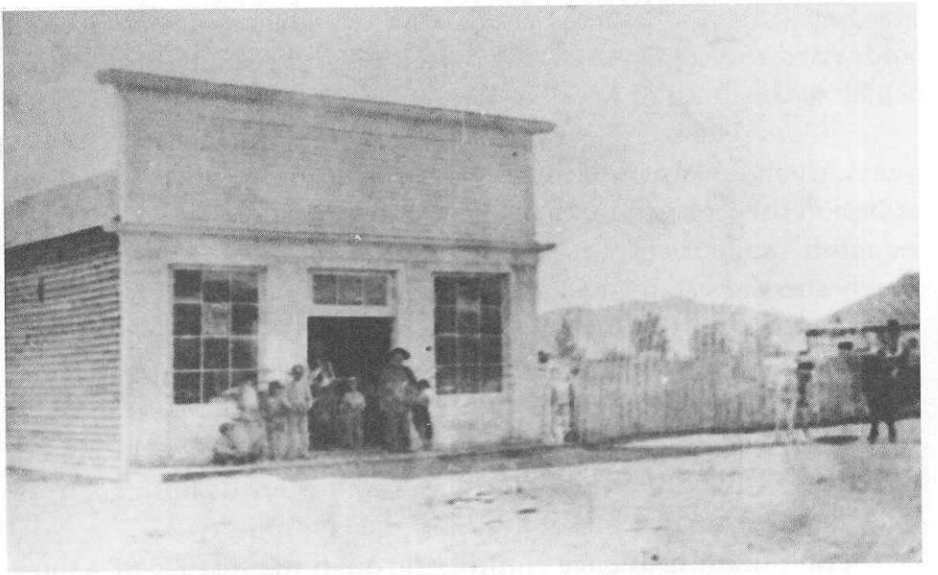
The site of present-day Vernal originally was nothing but a barren bench which the "Creek People" had named the "Bench." In 1878 the families of David Johnston, Jeremiah Hatch, and Alva Hatch moved onto the Bench and planted crops. Development of the Bench

into a separate community was hastened by the 1879 Meeker Massacre involving the White River Utes in Colorado who according to rumor tried to convince the Uintah Utes to join with them and kill all white men. Three Indian leaders met with Jeremiah Hatch, his son Alva, and Thomas Karren and his son David at Jeremiah's home on the Bench.[11] The Indians warned the settlers to move their cabins to a central site, arrange them into a fort, and fly a white flag. The Indians promised to help protect the fort. The people moved their homes to the site, forming a "U" beginning at what is now 54 West Main. A thirty-two foot abutment was built between the cabins with holes through which to shoot. It was planned to complete the U into a square, but the trouble was over before the fortifications were completed.

People at Jensen also "forted-up," establishing a fort at the Burton ranch, with settlers and cowboys joining together for protection.[12] Settlers living around the north portion of Ashley Valley had been asked to join with the residents of the Bench in establishing a fort. Most of them resisted because of conflicts between the Mormons on the Bench and the non-Mormons on the Creek.

People living in Ashley appointed Alma Taylor captain of a militia group, and he ordered the scattered settlers along the creek to move into town. The only other act the militia performed was to seize all the ammunition in James Gibson's store as he had been accused of selling ammunition to the Indians.[13]

Hostile Indians burned all the cabins on Blue Mountain and appropriated beef from the cattle herds on the mountain, but the uprising was settled with no further incidents.[14] The following winter was terribly cold with snow so deep that many animals froze and died. People nearly starved, including many new settlers who had arrived thinking wheat for flour could be obtained. However, grasshoppers had taken much of the wheat, leaving the settlers to glean the remaining wheat from off the ground. This short supply of wheat was dirty and soon became moldy. When ground it made "black bread" on which the settlers mostly relied. Settlers remembered this as the "bad winter of '79." People were also plagued with a diphtheria epidemic which took the lives of several people. Settlers surviving that bitter winter moved their cabins back to their home-



Lycurgus Johnson store in Ashley Town. This is the only known photo of Ashley Town. (UCLRHC collection)

steads and life went on with the work of providing for their families and each other.

Schools and churches were built on the Bench. The settlement was first called Jerico and then Hatch Town, because of the many Hatch family members in the fort, including two cabins for Jeremiah Hatch's polygamous wives. Jeremiah Hatch did not like the name Hatch Town; in 1884 he met with LDS church officials and it was decided to create a town, naming it Ashley Center. The town was surveyed in 1885 and businesses began to be established. A store owned by John A. Blythe and his brother-in-law Thomas L. Mitchell was built on the southwest corner of the main intersection. By 1886 Blythe and Mitchell sent a petition to the Post Office Department requesting a post office called "Ashley Center Post Office" be established in their store. Postal officials felt the name Ashley Center was too much like the name of Ashley and that mail would become mixed-up between the two post offices. The new post office was approved but assigned the name "Vernal Post Office." Thomas Mitchell was designated as the postmaster. Although Mitchell and Blythe accepted the name, other townspeople rebelled, saying this

was not Vernal but Ashley Center. However, when mail was received addressed to Vernal, Utah, they relented and accepted the name, which means fresh or new like springtime.

Settlers retained a fear of the Indians, and during the next few years much tension and unrest also developed between the three tribes on the reservation. In 1886 the Department of War decided to establish a military post to "discipline and control" the Indians. Fort Duchesne was established about midway between the Uintah and Ouray agencies. As Fort Duchesne was established in the heart of the Indian reservation, it was closed to white settlement until after the opening of the reservation in 1905. Today Fort Duchesne is the center of Ute Indian activities, with the tribal council offices located at the site. The Bureau of Indian Affairs administers its business from new buildings on the hill southwest of the community.

A dominant influence running through the history of Ashley Valley has been that of the LDS church and the establishment of ecclesiastical units or wards. Initially the names of settlements were often the same as the name of the LDS ward at that location. For example, Maeser, or Mill Ward as it was first called, is located a few miles northwest of Vernal. People began settling in that vicinity about 1877. When Hatch Fort was discontinued in 1880, Robert Bodily gave William G. Reynolds forty acres for a mill site. Reynolds moved the flour mill which he had temporarily set up in the fort to this new location and the ward became known as Mill Ward. In 1892 a post office was established about one-quarter mile east of Reynolds's mill. Early stores were established at what is now the Maeser intersection of 1500 North and 1500 West. A town was organized and a number of businesses were established. The town was eventually unincorporated, but many businesses continue to operate around this intersection.

In the fall of 1878 Bradford R. Bird, a Latter-day Saint colonizer, located in the part of the county two miles southeast of Vernal that is now included in Naples Ward. By 1881 six other families had moved into the area. Jeremiah Hatch, presiding elder for the church in Ashley Valley, organized a branch of the church in 1884 and appointed Porter William Merrill as presiding elder over the new district. It was known as Merrill Ward until 1887 when the name was

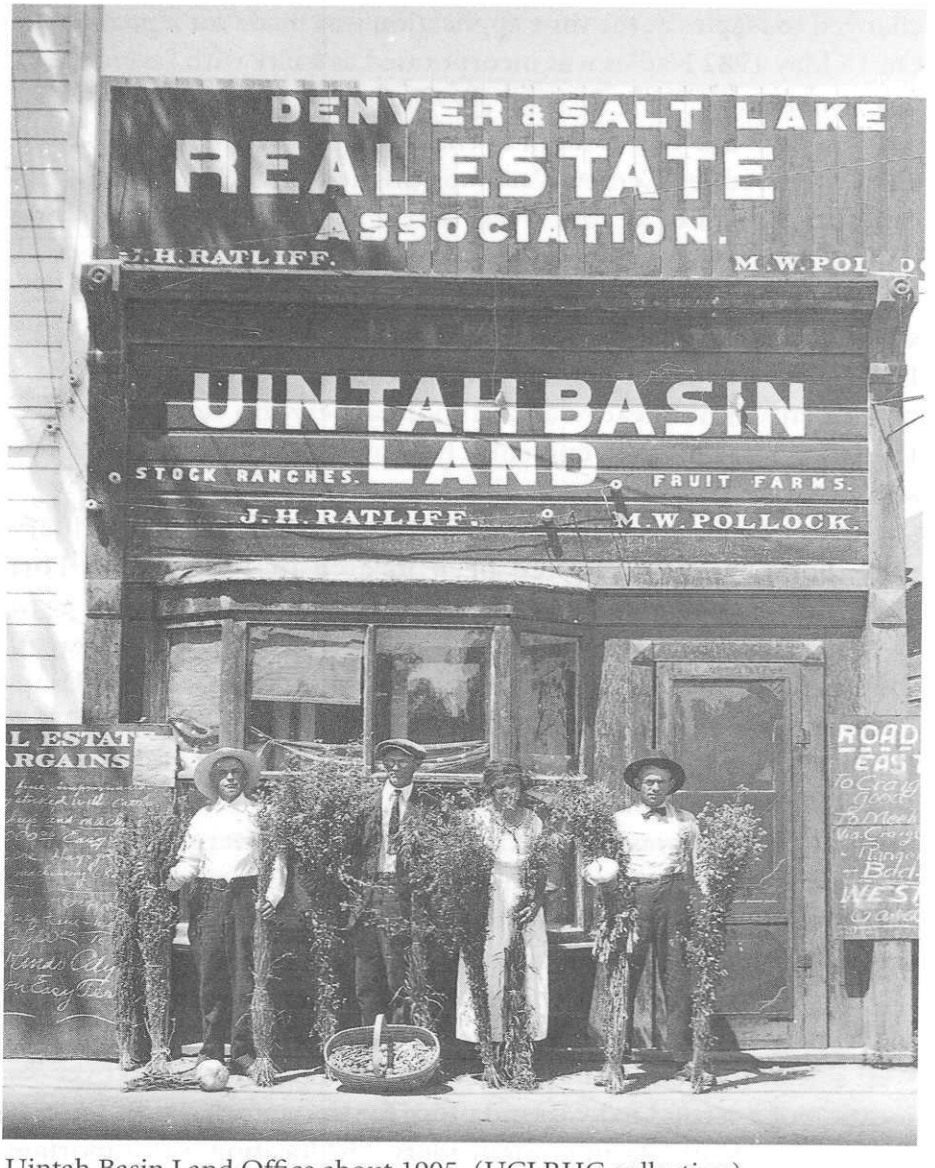
changed to Naples at the time application was made for a post office. On 13 May 1982 Naples was incorporated as a city with Lawrence C. Kay as mayor.

Glines Ward was created at the same time as Merrill Ward in 1884 when Ashley Center Ward was divided. The Glines area—2.5 miles southwest of Vernal—was first settled in 1879 by two lone homesteaders, Peter Peterson and Peter Shirts.

When brothers Isaac I. and Benjamin Slaugh settled in the present-day Davis area in 1888, it was part of Merrill Ward. In 1912 Davis Ward was organized and named in honor of George A. Davis, a prominent church leader and schoolteacher who started the first Davis school. This area currently has one of the finest elementary schools in the district.

Ouray originated across the river from where the first military post, Fort Thornburgh, had been located in 1881. When Fort Thornburgh was moved to Ashley Valley, a settlement began to grow in the Ouray area. Ouray derives its name from Ute chief Ouray of the Uncompahgre Band. It is the topographical center of the Uinta Basin and has the lowest altitude of any land in the basin. In 1892 an Indian agency and an Indian school were located at Randlett, about fifteen miles west of Ouray on the Uintah River. When the Indian boarding school was consolidated with the Whiterocks boarding school, the settlement was abandoned until 1905 when it became one of three townsites laid out by the Interior Department prior to the opening of the reservation to homesteaders.

The opening of the Ute reservation for white homesteading in 1905 initiated the beginning of numerous small communities on the west side of the county. In January 1905 a dispute flared up over the location of a second federal land office for the state designed to serve the needs of Uinta Basin homesteaders. The location was important because it meant a boost to that community's economy. Thousands of people would flock to the land office to register for land and await the lottery or drawing for the land. Gentiles opposed placing the land office in a Mormon town such as Vernal, Provo, or Heber City because Mormons would then have an advantage in securing the best land on the reservation and would control land-office activities and homesteading activities on the reservation. The *Salt Lake Tribune*



Uintah Basin Land Office about 1905. (UCLRHC collection)

pointed out that if the Interior Department decided to locate the land office in Price, gentiles would have a better chance at securing land on the reservation.

Community competition also arose. Price citizens felt they had more to offer than the towns surrounding the reservation, such as a

railroad, telephone and telegraph lines, and an important road to the reservation. Also, Price had been the government outfitting point for the reservation for the past twenty years. Heber City residents disagreed, stating their town was equally qualified to host the land office.

A bill was passed in March 1905 to include Uintah, Wasatch, and Carbon counties in the land-office district. The site for the land office was to be determined by the president. The act also set the date of 1 September 1905 for opening the reservation. A serious threat to the opening had surfaced in 1902 when two mineral leases, one to Raven Mining Company and the other to Florence Mining Company, were approved. Questions concerning the legality of the claims after the reservation opened and shadowy congressional connections associated with these claims threatened to derail the opening permanently.[15] The act passed in March 1905 gave the Raven Mining Company sixty days to locate and file on one hundred mining claims of Gilsonite and asphalt minerals. It also gave the Florence Mining Company the preferential right to locate 640 acres of mineral lands.

Residents of Grand Junction, Colorado, were upset. The *Daily Sentinel* denounced the act as being a "land steal and a farce." The paper reported that hundreds, if not thousands, of homesteaders were camped along the White and Green rivers in eastern Utah awaiting the opening of the reservation in March. The Colorado newspaper further accused the Florence Mining Company of perpetrating a land steal worth millions of dollars.[16] A mud-slinging newspaper fight with each sector blaming the other of fraud continued until 18 July 1905.

On 14 July President Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed that on 28 August 1905 the Uintah Reservation would: "be opened to entry, settlement and disposition under the general provisions of the homestead and townsite laws of the United States."[17] Provo, Utah, was chosen as the location for the lottery, with drawings to take place on 17 August at 9:00 A.M. Some Salt Lake City residents opposed the choice, thinking the lottery location should have been Salt Lake City. Land commissioner Richards responded, stating that past land drawings held in large cities attracted "gamblers, prostitutes, and servant girls."[18] These kinds of people were really not homeseekers. The land-registration process was clogged, which caused trouble for local officials.

Registration would begin at 9:00 A.M. on 1 August with desig-

nated places of registration at Provo, Vernal, and Price, Utah, and Grand Junction, Colorado. These towns began to prepare for the rush of homeseekers. Price added more streetlights around the railroad station, warehouses, and other important locations. Extra policemen were hired along with a night watchman. Additional facilities for drinking water were provided. Provo urged the merchants and townsfolk to prepare for the anticipated thousands of homeseekers. Tents ranging in size to ten feet by twelve feet were erected. The registration in Grand Junction was held in the city auditorium. Extra toilets were installed. Two hundred cots were set up. The city council augmented its small police force with men from the Pinkerton Agency. The Denver and Rio Grande Railroad pitched a large circus tent adjacent to the auditorium. The town of Vernal also readied itself. W.F. Stalwill and four land-office clerks were assigned to the Vernal land office. Ira Burton allowed homeseekers to erect tents at Burton Resort.

When 1 August arrived the four cities were filled with homeseekers and an army of peddlers selling information and maps indicating the best locations for homesteads. For the first two weeks in August, homeseekers could register for a chance at the 160–acre allotments and receive a permit to enter the Uintah Indian Reservation to scout possible homestead sites. When the registration concluded, 37,657 individuals—including 18,858 in Provo; 15,387 in Grand Junction; 1,876 in Vernal; and 1,536 in Price—had completed their applications and eagerly awaited the lottery which began in Provo on 17 August 1905. The lottery took three days and a total of 5,772 names were pulled from the barrel.

The first 111 names drawn were permitted to return to the reservation on 28 August to stake out their homesteads and file with land-office officials in Vernal. All winners were permitted to enter the reservation to locate and file by 26 October.

In the first five years of the century animosity had existed among the Indians, Mormons, and gentiles in the state and county over the opening of the reservation to white settlement. The Indians did not want the white people infringing on their land. The Mormons and the non-Mormons each thought the other group was going to receive preferential treatment. What most of these twentieth-century settlers

found at the end of the rainbow was not a pot of gold—it was inexpensive land that required extensive irrigation works to make it productive. Hard work, bankruptcy, conflict, drought, and some cooperation followed in the wake of the Uintah Indian Reservation land rush. That year, 1905, happened to be very wet—over twelve inches of rainfall. Many homesteaders believed that irrigation would not be necessary. In the two succeeding years, however, the rainfall returned to its normal quantity of about five inches and obtaining water became a high priority. The establishment of an irrigation system was completed in hopes the Utes would assimilate with the non-Indians and that the individual apportionment of their lands would permit them to prosper as individuals, building up estates that could be passed on through generations, making them self-supporting and independent.[19]

Of the original three million acres set aside as the Uintah Reservation by President Lincoln in 1861, one million became available to homesteaders. About one million acres of forest land, along with another 60,000 acres for reclamation purposes, had already been excluded from settlement. Indian allotments constituted about 111,000 acres, while federal reserves, set aside for exclusive use by Indians for grazing, timber, coal, agency burial grounds, poorhouse, and other uses, claimed 282,000 acres. Four thousand acres were temporarily withdrawn for townsites or because of their expected mineral value and were to be sold at a later date.[20]

The towns of Leota, Independence, Bennett, and Wilson-Ballard sprang into existence as homesteaders moved onto the reservation. Many of the new settlers were Mormons, so the church organization was often the nucleus of the community structure and activities. The influx of homesteaders also triggered the establishment of many settlements on the northern portion of the reservation. Hayden, five miles west and south of Whiterocks, was settled in 1905. Packer was established when a few settlers left Hayden because farming the rocky ground was not profitable. Hayden is now a ghost town and Packer was renamed Neola. Leeton, Tridell, and Bennett were located in the Whiterocks-LaPoint area. In 1908 a group of people settled about a mile south of LaPoint, and in 1909 a post office was approved for them under the name of Taft for President William Howard Taft.

When it was found the road had been built one mile too far south according to the boundary lines of the Ute Indian Reservation, the store and post office were moved to a new townsite being prepared one mile to the north which became known as LaPoint.

Homesteaders settled in the LaPoint area, and in 1913 the Whiterocks Irrigation Company applied for a townsite. It was recorded in 1914 and given the name of LaPoint. The irrigation company hired a crew of men and teams to level the sand domes that dominated the terrain, making the area more enticing to new settlers. At one time LaPoint was the second-largest community in the county; it had a thriving business district boasting general merchandise stores, several blacksmith shops, cream stations, pool halls, and a drug store with a fountain. Star Hall Theater was completed with a stage for local performances and the early silent movies. A large recreation hall was built for dances and basketball games.

Avalon was settled in 1928 in the Ouray Valley between Ouray and Randlett. Another early settlement southwest of Vernal in the Book Cliffs was Webster City, which was located in Uintah County before 1892 when boundaries with Grand County were changed. This strip of land was only used by cattlemen and was too far from the county seat to be desirable to Uintah County.[21] Webster City had been established by a cattle company in 1880 and became the biggest cattle operation in the Book Cliffs. Other settlements were made at Willow Creek and Hill Creek south of Ouray by cattlemen in 1894, and a farming settlement at Leland warranted a post office in 1899. In 1904 cattleman Frank Brewer and his family settled at Bitter Creek in the Book Cliffs about eighty miles southeast of Vernal. Eventually a one-room school was located in the area and the settlement became known as Bitter Creek.

While most communities were founded on agriculture, some communities in the Uinta Basin such as Moffat, Dragon, Watson, Rainbow, Bonanza, and Ignatio owed their existence to mining and the railroad. During the 1880s gold and copper mining led to the settlement of several mining camps in the mountains north of Vernal. By 1901 Bullion (or Bullionville), Parson's City, Camp Fudgy, and Dyer Mining Camp were abandoned.

Moffat, originally called "the Strip," came into existence when a

7,040–acre triangle was cut from the Uintah Indian Reservation in 1888 to allow for the mining of Gilsonite. The mining operations attracted a wide variety of people and a tent city quickly was followed by a permanent settlement. Outside of any law jurisdiction, it was wide open to gambling, prostitution, and other activities that came with mining-camp followers. Saloon owners illegally sold whiskey to Indians and the town provided a safe haven for outlaws using the Outlaw Trail traveling from Robber's Roost to Brown's Hole. The Strip was officially named Moffat after the Moffat Railroad that was slated to come through the area. Moffat was granted a post office on 13 December 1905.

In 1888 a rich deposit of Gilsonite had been found southeast of Vernal in the area of present-day Bonanza. The ore from the Bonanza mines was freighted out of the basin through Moffat to Price, Utah. With the building in 1904 of the Uintah Railway over the Book Cliffs from Mack, Colorado, a large mining operation began at Dragon in the Bonanza area. Ore was shipped by rail over Douglas Pass on the little narrow-gauge railroad to Mack and then taken east on the Moffat Railroad.

Mining at Moffat mostly closed down after 1904 with the building of the railroad to Dragon and with the opening of the reservation to homeseekers a year later. The Moffat post office operated until 1911 when it was closed by the government due to unethical operation procedures. In 1921 residents applied for another post office; however, the name Moffat was denied due to the first closure. The town was renamed Gusher because oil had been discovered three miles north of the community and the residents were hopeful the oil development would produce a real "gusher." Gusher was granted a post office on 2 March 1921 and still exists as a small community on the highway between Vernal and Roosevelt.

For a half-dozen years Dragon thrived as the end-of-the-line town for the railroad, even sporting the Uintah Railway Hotel; but in 1911 the rails were pushed ten miles farther north to a new mining camp named Watson. Dragon's days were numbered as its mines closed down and the railroad terminus moved.

Watson was settled in 1905 and gained importance as a shipping point for the Gilsonite ore mined there and at Harrison, a small min-

ing camp nine miles up the canyon. Watson had a company hotel called the Savory and a hotel/boarding house for workers and cowboys. Ore was also shipped from a mine at China Wall. Children of the miners living at Harrison and China Wall attended school at Watson.

Rainbow was another mining settlement, four miles southwest of Watson. The town was situated right over the Rainbow Mine. A railroad spur was laid in 1911, and, although Rainbow was considered a town at that time, it did not reach its peak until 1920. About 135 people resided in Rainbow in 1931. By 1938 mining operations were switched to Bonanza and the town was abandoned.

Bonanza was first settled in 1888 and named because of the rich deposit of Gilsonite near the settlement. Mining began in that area about 1903. Several stone buildings were built in the early 1900s. A boarding house was built in 1904 and was used as a depot for the old Uintah Stage Line which used horses and stagecoaches to convey people from Dragon to Vernal and Ouray. When Rainbow closed down in 1938, a mining camp was established at Bonanza because of its proximity to the Gilsonite deposits. Practically all of the camp buildings were moved from Rainbow and rebuilt around the stone buildings at Bonanza. Many improvements were made to the mine operations and essential utilities were provided to the townsite. New homes were built and old ones modernized. Children from Independence Mine, White River, Eureka, and Little Emma Mine attended the school at Bonanza. For many years a thriving community existed for the miners and their families.

Fire and explosions are a big danger in Gilsonite mines and occurred as early as 1894 at the St. Louis Mine on the Strip, killing two workers—Isaac C. Cook and Charles Hirsch. Another explosion in 1896 cremated two workers, Charles Anderson and Andy Garns, and the fire burned for some time. The Black Dragon Mine blew up in 1908, killing two Greek miners. Several other small fires and explosions occurred in different mines through the next few decades. On 9 October 1945 fourteen shafts exploded in the mine at Bonanza, setting fire to one of the largest veins of Gilsonite in the United States and throwing timber and rocks more than half a mile from the shaft, with debris crashing through homes and mine buildings.

Miraculously, not a single life was lost in this calamity. Another explosion of the mines at Big Bonanza on 4 November 1953 was more devastating, claiming the lives of eight workers.

Bonanza has modernized its equipment and buildings and still runs a large mining operation, but only a few officials live at the site. Workers live in Vernal and other surrounding communities. When the railroad closed in 1939, the Gilsonite was hauled to Craig, Colorado, by truck and then sent out on trains. Large tanker trucks now load at Bonanza, travel to the West Coast, and drive onto ships which haul them to their destinations in other countries, where the Gilsonite is delivered by the same truck.

Ignatio was a small settlement on the White River twenty miles east of Vernal and three miles southeast of Bonanza. It was named by the Uintah Railway but was better known as White River or White River Crossing. The cost of extending the railroad to Vernal was prohibitive, so an alternative, a toll road, was built by the railroad with a ferry on the Green River and a bridge over the White River. Ignatio was home for bridge tenders, guards, and maintenance workers on the bridge and toll road. In 1935 the toll-road company went out of business and the property was transferred to the county for maintenance.

Through the years, many of these small settlements have become ghost towns, lost their identity, or been absorbed by larger, more viable communities. The stories of their settlement, survival, and demise make a fascinating chapter in the county's colorful history.

When Congress created the Territory of Utah on 9 September 1850, the area now known as Uintah County became part of Green River County. The area remained in Green River County until 1862, at which time Wasatch County was created with the county seat at Heber. The entire area—with a northern boundary along the summit of the Uinta Mountains and encompassing the Uinta Basin and what is now Daggett County—was made part of Wasatch County.

When the first settlers arrived in Ashley Valley and formed the town of Ashley, they were compelled to travel over the mountain to Heber to take care of county business. This could be an extreme hardship, since it took five days to a month depending on weather conditions to travel to Heber by the only available means of travel—

team and wagon. By 1880 area residents were determined to have their own county. In January 1880, 136 residents signed a petition asking the legislature to form a new county in Ashley Valley, recommending it be given the name Coal County. The legislature responded positively and passed an act on 18 February 1880 creating the new county but changing the name to Uintah County.

The new Uintah County included what are now Uintah and Daggett counties, with the eastern boundary along the Utah-Colorado border. The boundary then ran from the northeast corner of Utah Territory to the 110th meridian, then south to the main channel of the Green River to the north line of Emery County at the time (along the summit of the Brown Cliffs), and then east to the Colorado border. The county seat was located in the town of Ashley, and the county was made a part of the First Judicial District.[22]

With the creation of Grand County in 1890, the southern end of Uintah County bordered Grand County. In 1892 part of Uintah County below the "3rd standard parallel south" was added to Grand County, and the new southern boundary ran east from the Green River to the Utah-Colorado line, jogging only at the eastern end along the summit of the Brown Cliffs.

Duchesne County was officially designated as a county on the first Monday in January 1915 at twelve o'clock noon and became Uintah's neighboring county to the west. Residents living in the area of present Duchesne County had petitioned the legislature to create a county out of the eastern portion of Wasatch County. A special election was held on 13 July 1914, with the majority of Wasatch County residents voting to form the new county. The line between Uintah and Duchesne counties was set at the 110th meridian. When a new federal map came out in 1916, it showed that the meridian passed three-fourths of a mile west of Roosevelt—placing Roosevelt in Uintah County. Some Duchesne County officials were living in Roosevelt, which had been designated as the county seat, and Uintah County did not want this strip of land.[23] As a result, there was a dispute over the boundaries. To settle the problem the residents of Uintah County and the residents on the disputed strip of land had to vote in the November 1916 election to annex the strip to Duchesne

County. The vote passed and the legislature defined the boundaries more clearly in 1917.[24]

On 7 January 1918 Daggett County, lying on the northern slopes of the Uinta Mountains, was created from the northern part of Uintah County. Four young soldiers went to World War I service as Uintah County residents and came back home as Daggett County residents. Except for a minor dispute over the eastern termination of the Daggett County boundary in 1919, settled in favor of Uintah County, the county's boundaries have been constant since 1917, and the official description is as follows:

> Beginning at a point on the summit of the Uintah range two and one-fifth miles west of the point where the Uintah special meridian intersects the summit of said Uinta Mountains, thence due south parallel with said meridian to the south boundary of the former Uintah Indian reservation; thence due south to the line between townships 11 and 12 south, thence east to the middle of the main channel of the Green River; thence down said channel to the third standard parallel south; thence east to the summit of the Brown Cliffs; thence north to the summit of the Uinta Mountains; thence west along the watershed of said mountains to the point of beginning.[25]

During Utah's territorial period, county courts remained as the county administrative body in all counties. Each was composed of a probate judge and three selectmen. The probate judge was elected by the territorial legislature for a four-year term; and the selectmen were chosen by the electorate of the county—one for a three-year term, one for a two-year term, and one for a one-year term. Thereafter, one was elected each year for a three-year term. Legislation in 1874 provided that the probate judge was to be elected by the qualified voters of the county. In 1887 the U.S. Congress stipulated that probate judges were to be appointed by the president of the United States. In 1888 the term of selectmen was changed to two years.

When Utah became a state in 1896, county courts (selectmen) were succeeded by a board of three county commissioners who were elected every two years. The board of county commissioners was to elect one of its members as chair. The selectmen of the county court

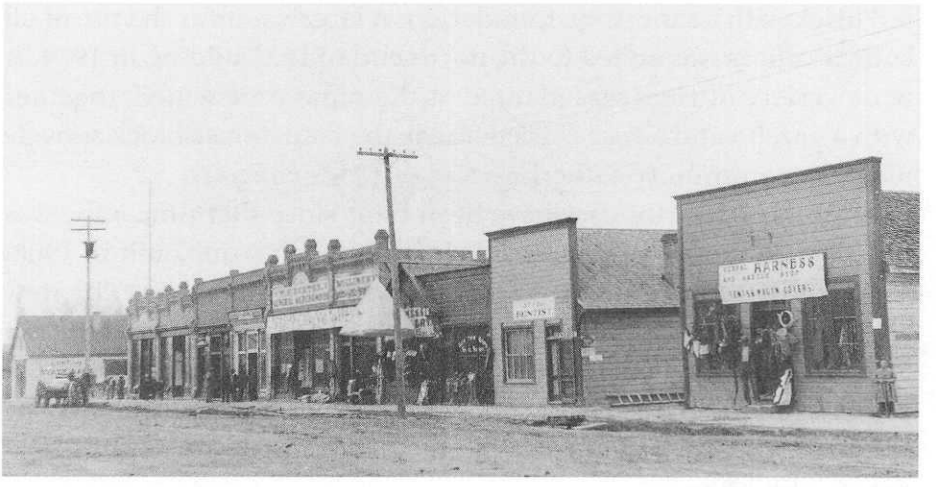
were to serve as the board of county commissioners until the first election. The transition from the county court to the board of county commissioners was completed on 7 May 1896.[26] This structure was changed in 1901, when the terms of office of the commissioners were changed to two four-year terms and one two-year term, alternating in order to keep an experienced commissioner in office at all times.

The first meeting of the Uintah County court officers appointed by the legislature was held on 3 March 1880. Jeremiah Hatch was probate judge, with Thomas Bingham, Sr., Isaac Burton, Sr., and Pardon Dodds as selectmen.[27] The meeting was held in the house of William Gibson, which had been moved into Ashley town from the Gibson homestead the preceding fall due to the Meeker Massacre disturbance. In a quit-claim deed dated 7 December 1881 Gibson sold for $300 this sixteen-by-thirteen foot, one-and-one-half-story log building to Uintah County to be used as a courthouse.[28] Judge Hatch appointed C.C. Bartlett as county clerk and William Ashton as assessor and collector. The more important acts of the county court during its first year included the creation of voting precincts and school districts as well as the appointment of C.C. Bartlett as county treasurer and Joseph H. Black as county school superintendent.

At the first election, Thomas Bingham was elected probate judge, with Isaac Burton, Sr., and Samuel Campbell as selectmen. These officers' names first appear in the records on 6 December 1880. A third selectman, N.C. Davis, took his seat on 7 March 1881.

In 1882 William C. Britt, Uintah County Clerk, was given permission to move the county desk to his private house and furnish office room, for which he was to be paid a reasonable compensation. Two of the selectmen were authorized to rent the county courthouse to best advantage. The Gibson cabin courthouse was then rented to J. Porter, who established a saloon in it until he was evicted for failure to pay the fifty dollars rent and to purchase a liquor license. It was then planned to fix the building up as a jail, but the selectmen decided instead to purchase a stove so that it could be used for sessions of the county court.[29]

Also interesting is the political history of Uintah County. Ashley remained the county seat until December 1893. The settlement on the Bench, by then called Vernal, had outgrown the town of Ashley,



South side of Uintah Avenue, Vernal's major street in 1910. (UCLRHC collection, photographer L. C. Thorne)

so in 1888 an effort was made to move the county seat to the newer and larger settlement. The question to move the county seat was submitted to the electorate in the fall of 1889, but insufficient votes were cast in favor of the change. On 7 November 1893, however, the proposition again was voted on, and this time 300 votes were cast for removal of the county seat from Ashley to Vernal, with only thirty-three against the change. Vernal accordingly was made county seat of Uintah County.[30]

Vernal was becoming the hub of both Ashley Valley and Uintah County, and the moving of the county seat in December 1893 helped solidify its position. The county records were transferred on 14 December and the log courthouse purchased from Gibson was moved to Vernal for use as the county clerk's office. It was located on the corner of North Vernal Avenue and First North. By 1899 the need for an adequate building for the transaction of county business had become pressing, and on 18 September 1899 the board of county commissioners decided to submit to the voters of Uintah County a request to bond the county for $16,000 to construct a building. The voters approved and contracts were let; work began on the courthouse in May 1900.

This new courthouse was a two-story structure constructed of

red brick with a sandstone foundation. A large vault for the use of all county offices was added to the north end of the building in 1924. A wide variety of trees was planted at the same time which, together with a gazebo and a rose garden, made the courthouse block a lovely place for community gatherings and outdoor concerts.

Two new courthouses have been built since that time. One was completed in March 1959 directly behind the first one built in 1900. The original building was torn down in October 1959. The new $367,600 county building was contracted out to Hansen Construction Company of Altamont, the low bidder. To complete the project, the county had to tear down the old courthouse, remove the statue in front of it, and remove the old jail, which was built inside the new building.

Construction began on a third courthouse in 1983. It was attached to the back of the second one and has a main entrance from the north. It is a combined county-state building, and employees moved into the building in January 1985. A new complex was built to the east for the jail. Bids were opened in December 1983 and the new jail was completed in 1986.

The settlement of Uintah County was a slow and difficult process. The resulting communities are a monument to the trials, hard work, heartaches, tragedy, dedication, and ingenuity of the early settlers and those who came later. Today Vernal is the hub of the county, providing a variety of activities and facilities for county residents, including recreation, shopping, and education. Vernal recently has been designated one of the hundred best places in the country to live and raise a family.[31]

ENDNOTES

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2. From the "History of Brigham Young" in Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

3. "Uinta Not What Was Represented," *Deseret News*, 25 September 1861.

4. George P. Malanson, "The Rise and Fall of the Uinta Valley Indian

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6. A. Reed, Governor's Message to the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah, 1863, Utah State Historical Society.

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10. John S. Gallagher, *The Post Offices of Utah* (Burtonville, MD: The Depot, 1977), 57.

11. Alva Hatch, unpublished family history, copy located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

12. *Vernal Express*, 24 March 1906.

13. Ibid., 17 March 1906.

14. Ibid., 24 March 1906.

15. U.S. Congress, 57th Congress, Senate, Senate Document 154 (28 January 1902).

16. *The Daily Sentinel* (Grand Junction, Colorado), 18 January 1905.

17. 34 U.S. Statutes 3119 (14 July 14 1905).

18. Craig Woods Fuller, "Land Rush in Zion," Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1992, 233–35.

19. See *Deseret News*, 31 August 1905, and *Vernal Express*, 25 November 1910, 7 June 1912, and 19 September 1913. For a detailed account of the openings of the Uintah and Uncompahgre reservations, see Fuller, "Land Rush in Zion," chap. 5.

20. At the time of the opening of the Uintah Reservation there were 111,269 acres allotted to and another 282,460 acres reserved for the Ute Indians; 1,010,000 acres were reserved for use by the Forest Service; 60,610 acres were reserved for the future site of Strawberry Reservoir; 2,100 acres were set aside for townsites; and 2,140 acres were temporarily withdrawn as having potential mineral value. Of the initial 3,039,000 acres that were a part of the original Uintah Reservation, 1,004,285 were opened to homesteaders. See U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report (1905)*. Of the 282,460 acres reserved exclusively for Indian use,

approximately 250,000 acres were created by joint resolution of Congress, 32 U.S. Statutes 744 (19 June 1902). The other reserves were created by presidential proclamations. They included land for timber, coal, school, burial grounds, poorhouse, etc. Congress along with the Executive Branch had come to realize the value of commonly owned and federally protected lands, especially for Indians living in arid climates. Information provided by Uintah County planner and researcher Robert Hugie.

21. *Grand Memories* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, Moab Camp, 1972), 49; *Vernal Express*, 3 March 1892.

22. *Inventory of the County Archives of Utah, Uintah County*, 13–14; *Laws of Utah*, 1880, 92–93.

23. *Vernal Express*, 31 March 1916.

24. *Laws of Utah*, 1917, 102–3.

25. Ibid., Revised Statutes, 1933, 19–1–27.

26. Minutes of the Uintah County Commission, vol. A, 223, Uintah County clerk's office.

27. Ibid., vol. A, 1.

28. Uintah County Recorder's Deed Book vol. 12, 35; Shirley Sowards, interview by author at Regional History Center, 19 August 1993.

29. Minutes of Uintah County Court, 4 September 1882; minutes of Uintah County Commission, vol. A, 15–19.

30. Minutes of Uintah County Commission, vol. A, 162.

31. Norman Crampton, *The 100 Best Small Towns in America* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995), 442.

4

"To Plow and to Sow—to Reap and to Mow"

AGRICULTURE AND THE LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY

The first white families who settled Uintah County had to produce everything needed for their survival. Farming and raising livestock met their basic needs at first, but as more people came into the valley, needs became more diversified and cooperative efforts developed. In those early years agriculture, livestock, timbering, mining, apiculture (bee keeping), and freighting provided the economic base for the county. Many of the settlers had professional and skilled training and began to practice professions, although most continued to do some farming to provide food for their families. Within the first decade of the settlement period, blacksmith shops, sawmills, flour mills, shingle mills, planing mills, livery stables, general stores, and, of course, saloons appeared. These were followed by brickyards, stone quarries, an ice cream factory, creameries, dairies, and a variety of other commercial endeavors.

By 1893, 169 homes were located in the county. These included sixty houses valued from $75 to $500 each; six cabins valued from $50 to $200 each; ninety-eight log homes valued from $10 to $250 each; two brick homes valued from $1,400 to $1,500 each; three stone

homes valued from $250 to $1,200 each; eleven shops valued from $200 to $700 each; three saloons valued from $200 to $700 each; and one mill valued at $1,250.

The county records that year also showed 3,457 horses and mules valued from $18.79 to $40.75 each; 7,358 cattle valued from $9.30 to $27.06 each; 33,706 sheep valued at $1.50 per sheep; 703 pigs valued from $2.20 to $3.55 each; and 865 beehives valued at $2.50 each.

A large increase in homes and businesses was noted by 1894, with 505 homes, two mills, four saloons, eleven shops, and fifteen stables. This may have been partly due to the Gilsonite activity.

By 1900 records showed 811 homes, five shops one saloon, one opera house, and four mills. In 1907 the numbers had increased to 977 homes, seven shops, and two mills. These figures indicate that the economy of the county was increasing yearly.[1]

Livestock

Livestock initially was the main industry of Uintah County. When the Ute Indian Agency first located in Whiterocks, the men at the agency began to build up cattle herds. The cattle were eventually brought east as far as the Green River and then taken to the surrounding mountains. Large cattle herds had been coming to Brown's Park from Texas and other eastern areas since as early as the 1850s. Nearly 5,000 head of cattle wintered in Brown's Park the winter of 1872–73. When Pardon Dodds was released as Indian agent, he and Morris R. Evans brought to Ashley Valley Dodds' herd of cattle and the herd Evans purchased from Hoy brothers in Brown's Hole. Dodds set up a trading post in 1873 that effectively began the town of Ashley. Many of the Brown's Park cowboys began riding over the mountain for supplies and sought board and room in Huffaker's upstairs rooms or in the attic of Britt's store.

The K Ranch, located on the Utah-Colorado line with property in both states, was a big cattle operation owned by P.R. Keiser which brought many cowboys to the area. Keiser first brought a large herd of cattle north to Brown's Hole, but when the grass became overgrazed by the 4,000 head of cattle which had been moved into the Hole in 1871 and 1872, he moved his herd out and began the K Ranch. A large syndicate from New York managed by S.K. Royal

established the Red Butte Ranch west of the K Ranch on Cockle Bur, about seven miles east of Jensen, and brought in a large herd of cattle. A.C. Hatch brought cattle from Heber City and encouraged other cattlemen to follow suit. Mosby Mountain west of Vernal was named after another Ashley Valley cattleman, Dan Mosby. Many cattle were ranged around Ouray. Charley Hill, who came to Ashley Valley as a trapper for the Hudson Bay Company, started a cattle company on Hill Creek and Willow Creek in the Book Cliffs. When the government set aside this section for the Ouray Indian Agency, the cattlemen had to move out.

Two factors—free grass and the availability of water—influenced cattlemen to move their herds to Uintah County. Most of the land in the region belonged to the federal government or was part of the public domain and open to anyone who would use it. As long as the land remained public domain, no territory or state could tax it, so cattlemen took advantage of the situation by allowing their cattle to roam at will. Roundups were held in the fall, with all the cattlemen working together to bring the cattle off the mountains.

During the hard winter of 1879–80, most of the cattle in Ashley Valley were lost. Cattle owners who entered the winter worth from $5,000 to $30,000 came out in the spring practically broke. Many of the settlers had just arrived that summer and neither hay nor grain was available to sustain the cattle. A big snowfall followed by a thaw settled the snow down to eight or ten inches, and it then froze like a sheet of ice. Some cattle died standing erect, frozen stiff—they simply starved and froze. More than 75 percent of all the cattle perished. It was ironic that James McKee, who owned more cattle than anyone else, lost a lighter percentage than any of the others, possibly because his cattle had been in the area a few years and were better acclimated to the range. Some of the heavy losers were S.D. Colton, Lycurgus Johnson, Nathan Davis, Isaac Burton and his sons, Teancum Taylor, Joseph Hardy, and Alf Johnson. Even with their great losses these men restored their herds, built many other industries in Ashley Valley, and became leaders of the community.

Cattlemen continued to bring cattle to the county, and in 1893 a record number of cattle were sold. As herds continued to grow, so did the problem of cattle rustling. Following 1893 and for the remainder

of the decade, Utah and the nation faced particularly difficult times economically, and perhaps this was one reason for cattle-rustling activities in the county and elsewhere. During the years 1896 to 1898 many rustlers were caught and sent to prison. Some were young men from Mormon families who had gone astray, others were outlaws from Brown's Park and other areas attracted by the success of the rustling enterprise.[2] Large herds roamed the land unattended and some men acquired their start in the cattle business by stealing unbranded calves. Constant conflict resulted between the small and large cattle companies. In fact, the cattle business proved to be so difficult in the early days that many men gave up the business.[3] Still, the county assessment rolls in 1902 listed 9,591 head of cattle valued at $155,828. In 1912 the Uintah Cattle and Horse Growers Association was organized to protect the livestock industry from thieves and to issue an authorized brand book.

Part of the old cattle range was included in the Ashley National Forest when it was set aside by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1908. Permits were issued to area stockmen based on the number of stock owned, prior use, and commensurate ranch property.

Cattle raising has always been one of the most important enterprises of the county; most of the farm produce raised was livestock and their by-products.[4] No attempt was made to fatten them, as the distance to railroads was too far to market grain-fed stock. The cattle were turned onto either the free summer range or the forest reserve and then driven to the railroad each fall and sold as feeders and stockers. The cattle were trailed to either Craig, Colorado, or to Green River, Wyoming, where they were shipped by train to Kansas or other points. When the Uintah Railway came to Dragon, cattle were shipped from the county to market by rail, ending the long cattle drives. Later, when trucking became available, cattle were trucked to Craig, Colorado, and sold as prime beef.

Although the cattle industry was at one time the dominant industry in Uintah County, with the decrease in the prices of feeders, the large herds were disposed of until today only a remnant of the former vast numbers that grazed the hills remains. Instead of the large herds, cattlemen began running smaller herds of a better grade

of stock. Dairy herds also were started and the production of milk and butter helped the local economy.

The sheep industry also has been part of the backbone of Uintah County's economy. Sheep were first introduced to the valley during the hard winter of 1879 when Robert Bodily brought in sixty head. The sheep survived the rigors of that winter much better than did cattle. Tom Caldwell brought a small herd of sheep into the area and located them in Naples Ward. He sold the sheep to Isaac Burton, Sr., and his son-in-law, Ben Chestnut, who took the sheep onto Diamond Mountain. George Young and C.S. Carter were the first to bring big herds of sheep to the valley. By the mid-1890s more than 50,000 head of sheep were in the region.

Wool became one of the county's most important industries as the sheep herds built up. As early as 1897 C.S. Carter built shearing corrals. In 1899, 500,000 pounds of wool was shipped from Uintah County and sold for twelve and one-half cents per pound. County assessment rolls in 1902 showed 86,722 head of sheep valued at $196,250.

In 1906 the Uintah Railway Company built shearing pens on the Green River to encourage the shipping of wool by train. In 1908 some 600,000 pounds of wool was clipped. In 1912 pens were built at Bonanza and Dragon; in 1914 the Uintah Sheep Shearing Association and the Uintah Woolgrowers Association were formed. Sheep shearing was a big industry with many crews employed. In 1917 George Wardle's sheep-shearing crew sheared 21,000 sheep in May. Corrals were built in Jensen, and by 1929 Watson had a shearing plant. In 1932 sheep-shearing plants were handling 4,000 head a day. More than 200,000 head of sheep, producing 1,800,000 pounds of wool, were owned by Vernal sheepmen by 1934.

If sheepmen were located too far from these shearing plants to bring in their herds, many small crews were available that would go to the individual sheep ranches and shear the herds. Beginning in the 1940s Mexican sheep-shearing crews began coming to the area with big outfits, shearing fast and going on their way to another ranch.

The introduction of sheep into Uintah County contributed to the decline of the cattle industry, creating conflicts. Cattlemen, protective of their range, feared the encroachment of sheep; to stop the

spread of sheep, they sometimes resorted to violence. Sheep and cattle "wars" occurred on both Diamond Mountain and Blue Mountain, resulting in the deaths of over 1,000 sheep and one herder.

In 1909 range conditions were noted as being "exceptionally good" and about 80,000 sheep were under permit on the Ashley Forest. This number increased in 1914 to 96,110. In 1919 there were 100,000 sheep and 11,000 cattle on the forest range.[5] In 1929, 102,000 sheep and 10,000 cattle and horses were grazing on Ashley National Forest summer ranges. These numbers do not include sheep in the county not on the forest reserve. According to county assessment records, livestock increased and decreased in the county, as the following chart depicts:

Year	*Sheep*	*Cattle*	*Horses*	*Swine*
1879	60	5,000		
1893	33,706	7,358	3,457	703
1902	86,722	19,591		
1900	70,162	17,898	2,737	607
1910	124,524	6,154	3,060	479
1914	104,321	8,106	3,565	
1920	128,451	30,404	10,793	1,744
1930	175,492	13,492	3,575	
1940	102,272	14,406	3,430	
1950	62,239	14,239	2,134	1,497
1960	77,011	17,785	1,405	
1979	27,335	20,430	1,726	
1993	18,200	48,000[6]		

When settlers first arrived in Ashley Valley, livestock was placed wherever the feed was best, as most range was public domain. In winter cattle were kept in the lowlands and in summer the herds were taken to the mountains. Fighting over waterholes and choice locations was constant. Then the government became involved. At the end of the nineteenth century, settlers had spread across the United States. The frontier was vanishing and a growing number of conservationists worried about protecting the remaining unsettled lands. Several laws were passed as a result of pressure from the conservation movement. In 1891 Congress passed the General Land Law Revision

Act; it included a provision authorizing the president to set aside forest reserves from the unreserved public domain. This was a major legislative breakthrough in the long fight for federal forest protection and the first step in closing America's vast nineteenth-century open-land frontier.

One of the reserves created by President Grover Cleveland in 1897 was the Uinta Forest Reserve, which was headquartered in Provo and included most of the Uinta Mountains. Local opposition to the reserve was evident in the early letters and reports of early forest rangers, who struggled to maintain a good relationship with local inhabitants, particularly the ranchers who had been using the reserve for grazing. Assistant ranger Grant Carpenter and forest guard Albert Hardy served the county. In 1905 the U.S. Forest Service was created when the Bureau of Forestry and the Forestry Division of the General Land Office were merged. Later that year President Theodore Roosevelt removed the mountainous area of the Duchesne River drainage from the Uintah Indian Reservation and made it part of the Uinta National Forest.

The Ashley National Forest was created on 1 July 1908 from the eastern portion of the Uinta National Forest. This forest had several districts, including Altonah, Whiterocks, Vernal, Manila, and Mountain View, Wyoming. Each district had a district ranger, and the forest headquarters was established in Vernal. The ranger was given authority to sell timber, create grazing allotments, and make most of the decisions essential to operating the forest in the particular area.

In 1971 the Ashley forest was consolidated from five districts to four. At that time 133,000 acres was taken from the Roosevelt District and added to the Vernal District. New grazing allotments, timber sales, and special use areas were added to the district. In 1994 the process of combining the Roosevelt and Duchesne districts was undertaken, reducing the districts to three. Many new changes are under consideration by the Clinton administration.

A tremendous amount of timber has been harvested from the forest. Prior to 1945 a yearly average of five to ten million board feet (MMBF) was taken from the forest. From 1945 to 1975 an average of fifteen MMBF was taken per year. Local infestation of trees by the mountain pine beetle resulted in an accelerated harvest of twenty to

twenty-five MMBF per year from 1975 to 1985. From 1985 to the present thirteen to fifteen MMBF per year have been taken. There is still much salvage material due to the mountain pine beetle kill, and with the passage of the Taylor Salvage Amendment the Forest Service is looking at an average of twenty MMBF to be harvested in the next two years.[7]

On 1 October 1968 President Lyndon B. Johnson approved legislation establishing the Flaming Gorge National Recreation Area as part of the Ashley National Forest, adding approximately 120,000 acres to the forest.

The High Uinta Wilderness Area is of great interest to outsiders as well as local residents. As early as 1949 a forest report stated that 115,000 acres of the Ashley National Forest—"where primitive conditions of transportation and habitation will be preserved as much as practical"—had been set aside. This designation continued until 28 September 1984, when Congress passed an act establishing the High Uintas Wilderness Area. The 460,000–acre wilderness included most of the original primitive area. Over half of the wilderness is in the Ashley forest, with the remainder on the Wasatch-Cache National Forest. It is the largest wilderness area in Utah.[8]

Besides early forest reserves withdrawn from Uintah County, and the large amount of land withdrawn when the reservation was opened to homesteading, Dinosaur National Monument land was withdrawn from the public domain in 1915. It originally included eighty acres but grew to 209,000 acres (318 square miles) by 1938. The public domain which remained was still used freely by all of the stockmen of Uintah County. This process continued until 1934, when public land-use policies were radically changed. Earlier some Colorado stockmen had taken their concerns to U.S. Congressman Edward T. Taylor of Colorado, while Utah stockmen had been expressing their concerns to U.S. Congressman Don B. Colton of Vernal. The resulting Taylor Grazing Act was passed in 1934, the outcome of several years of work by Colton. After Republican Colton's defeat in the 1932 election, the fight was taken over by his Democratic neighbor from western Colorado.[9] Taylor introduced a bill to extend grazing regulation to the public lands under the management of a division in the Department of the Interior. The bill was

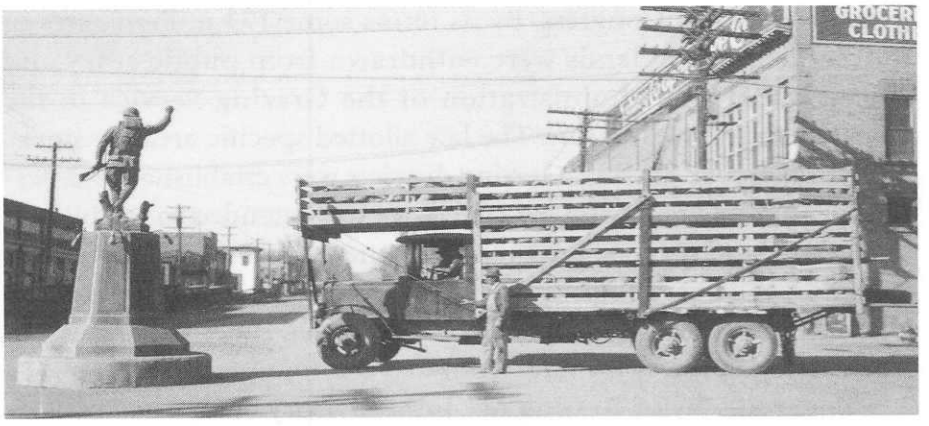
quickly passed by Congress. By its terms some 173 million acres of unreserved federal lands were withdrawn from public entry and placed under the administration of the Grazing Service in the Department of the Interior. The law allotted specific areas to stockmen for livestock grazing. Grazing districts were established and permits were issued for their use. Preference was extended to established stockmen, land owners, settlers, and owners of water. The fees were based on the cost of administration. The Indian grazing area in Uintah County also came under the Taylor Act. Rules were issued to permittees to protect the land from overuse.

Under the Taylor Grazing Act, local advisory boards had considerable authority. Board members were elected by land-permit holders. Meetings were held in Uintah County to organize a grazing district. Hugh Colton was named secretary of the Vernal district. In August 150 cattlemen, sheepmen, and farmers met in Vernal at the county courthouse and formed the Vernal Grazing Association.

The Taylor Grazing Act was in some respects the forerunner of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which was established in 1946 and eventually assumed responsibility for the administration of grazing laws on public land. The BLM initially was only concerned with livestock operations, but soon the agency's role extended to mineral leases, recreation, wildlife, water development, and various other functions under a concept of multiple use.

Greek sheepmen from the Price and Helper area had brought many herds of sheep into the area, which caused a conflict with local sheepmen until the Taylor Grazing Act was passed and the public domain was placed under federal regulations. Some of the newcomers did not have citizenship papers and were unable to secure grazing permits.[10] When sheepman Cliff McCoy was asked in an interview how the Taylor Grazing Act affected him, he replied:

> It was good when it first started. It was suited most to the livestock people because it got rid of a lot of transients off our county. We had thousands and thousands come here from Price and down in that country. You had to watch close or a lot of them would take your sheep when they left. They used a lot of our feed. I remember one year when one sheepman brought in 15,000 head of sheep and wintered right on the range where we were located. The Taylor

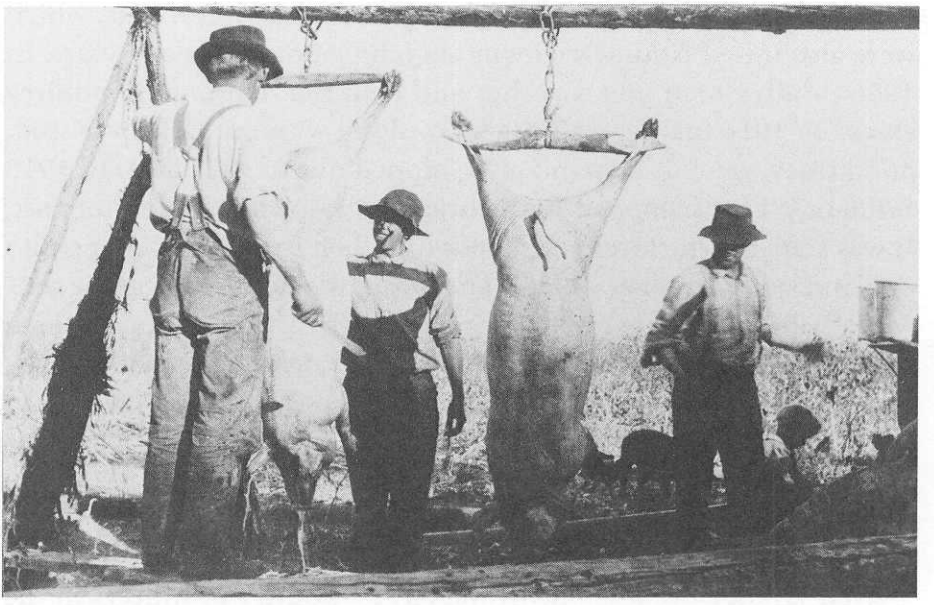


Trucking lambs from Vernal to Craig, Colorado in the 1930s. World War I doughboy statue was located in the center of town at that time. (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne collection)

> Grazing Act did away with those people. The Taylor Grazing was run at first by sheepmen and ranchers then they began sending in people out of the east who had never seen our country—dictating to us. The forest was the same way. Our allotments weren't cut down, but the number of livestock we could run on the allotments were cut to about half.[11]

By 1935 a grazing office was set up in Vernal. Herds of both cattle and sheep were decreased in order to stop overgrazing of the range. When grazing permits were issued in 1935, William Siddoway obtained one of the first permits, allowing him to run 9,000 sheep. At the peak of the industry in the early 1930s, around fifty sheepmen ran about 100,000 sheep in Uintah County. In 1960 twenty-nine sheepmen ran 44,538 head of sheep. Twenty-two of these had herds of over 1,000 head. The balance was owned by farmers or small ranchers running from one to three hundred head.

There were only two large year-round herds left in the county in 1996. One herd of about 3,500 head belonged to Lynn Siddoway, grandson of William Siddoway; another of about 1,200 belonged to Doc Nile Holmes. A few sheepmen from Colorado lease winter range south of Vernal, and a few Utah sheepmen also winter sheep south of Vernal. A number of people keep up to twenty or thirty head of sheep on their farms or ranches.



T. G. Alexander with knife in hand butchering hogs (UCLRHC, T. G. Alexander collection)

Thousands of wild horses ran in the hills in the early days. The A.C. Hatch Cattle and Horse Company came into Ashley Valley in the 1870s; it placed its livestock along Ashley Creek and then down on the Green River before eventually establishing the A H Ranch on Blue Mountain. Horses were plentiful by 1897 and needed to be thinned out. Thomas Davenport bought 675 horses for canning purposes at $7.50 a head. The Hatch company began raising thoroughbred horses, and other blooded horses were brought to the area. By 1907 Ashley Valley claimed eight stallions including three Percherons, two Shires, one coach horse, one Clydesdale, and one thoroughbred, besides several good jacks. Eventually thousands of well-bred wild horses were running free on Blue Mountain. In 1927 many of the wild horses were disposed of by the county. Again, in 1929, the woolgrowers and cattlemen of Ashley Valley held a meeting and decided that an extermination campaign against wild horses on Diamond Mountain was necessary to preserve forage needed for livestock. Under the direction of Ernest Eaton, 700 horses were gathered and eliminated.

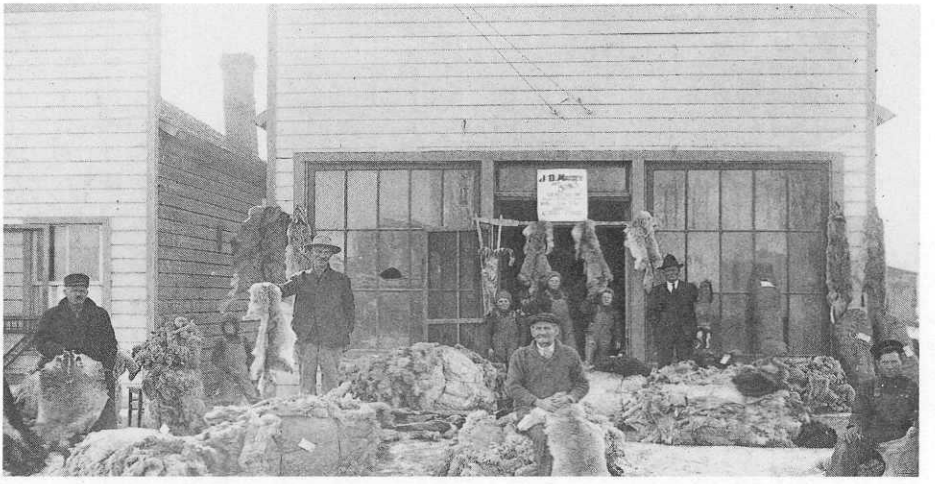
Hogs, turkeys, and poultry were other early livestock industries.

Almost every family raised its own chickens and a few pigs, which were also raised commercially in Uintah County for many years. In 1906 poultry men met together and held the first annual poultry show. By 1914 turkeys and chickens, along with butter, clover seed, and honey, were in demand and shipped out of the basin. In 1915 William Witbeck shipped 1,000 turkeys to Salt Lake City parcel post. It was stated in the local newspaper that "hen fruit" was coming into demand, as 13,000 eggs were shipped from the Acorn Mercantile on 7 May 1915, and another 12,000 on 28 May by U.S. mail. In 1916 ten tons of turkeys were mailed in five days. The demand for turkeys was such that poultry thieves began infesting the valley. By 1920 turkeys had become a big part of the local economy, with 10,000 pounds shipped in November; 40,000 pounds were shipped in 1923. The turkey business thrived until 1934, when it began to dwindle.

With the opening of Dudley Poultry Farm in Jensen in 1927, A. DeMar Dudley became one of the largest poultry producers in the county, running the business for fifty years. In 1960 Dudley's operation had grown to 8,000 birds. The Charles Olsen family in Naples also had a thriving egg business which commenced in 1934 and ran for at least fifty years, with assessment books indicating that Olsen owned 1,650 hens in 1960. Eggs were delivered to grocery stores as well as being sold from the farms. Jennie Hunting also was in the poultry business and had about 1,000 birds.

In the early days some people made money killing wolves, mountain lions, and coyotes and collecting the bounty paid by the county. In 1943 the Utah State Board of Agriculture appointed three men—Harold Reader, John Bennion, and W. N. Preece—to the county's Predatory Animal Control Board. The bounty was fifteen dollars on mountain lions and grey, black, or timber wolves; it was six dollars each on coyotes, lynxes, and bobcats. Wool growers paid a mill levy for the service—twenty-five mills on the bounty program and five mills for cooperation with the Bureau of Fishery and Wildlife Service.[12]

Many hide and fur companies operated in the area. By 1938 a prosperous domestic fur industry had developed in Uintah County. Eventually the selling and exchange of some fox and mink breeding stock became more profitable than the selling of pelts. The value of



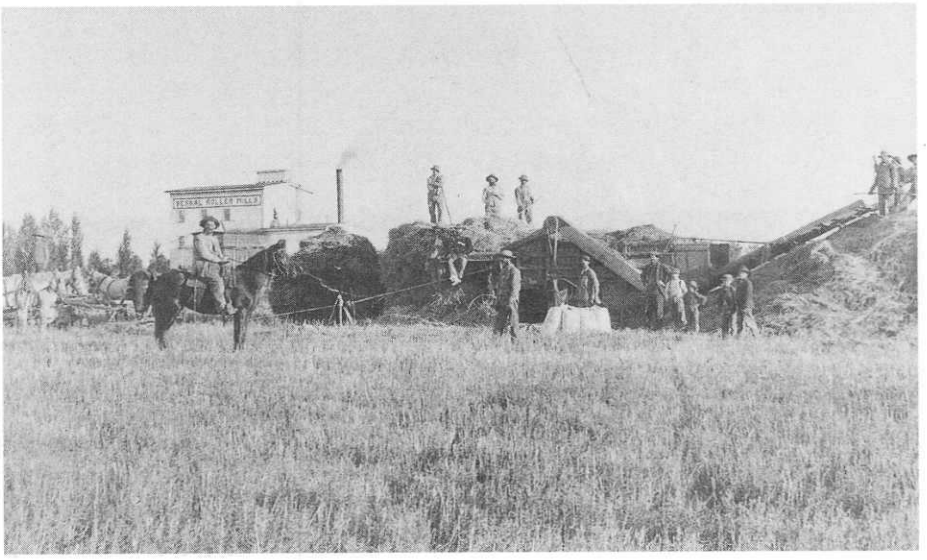
John D. and Van Massey, dealers in hides and furs. (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne collection)

the pelts varied, with fox pelts bringing from twenty-five to one hundred dollars and mink pelts bringing from ten to forty dollars. Between 750 to 1,000 domesticated fur-bearing animals were raised on fur farms near Vernal. Among the pioneers of this industry in the county were Joseph Hacking, John W. Pope, and Phil Stringham, who introduced the silver fox. Others breeding and producing these animals in the 1930s were H. Walter Woolley, J. Ferron Hacking, Bud Powell, Milas Y. Colton, and Earl Schmid. Milas Colton's mink ranch had grown into a major business by 1956 and for a long time was a landmark on the Maeser Highway. This company owned 1,250 mink in 1960 and was one of the largest mink farms in the state.

Farming

As the economy of the area became more diversified, farming also evolved from the subsistence level to a thriving industry. Settlers began growing gardens to feed their families and grew hay for their livestock. When more hay was produced than was needed, it was sold to others arriving in the valley.

An early experiment in Ashley Valley was the attempt to produce silk. Mulberry trees were planted, silkworms imported, and special instruction provided on the care and feeding of the worms. The silk produced was good, but not enough profit was made to justify the



Jeremiah H. Murray on horse with his threshing machine crew at the Vernal Roller Mill. (UCLRHC collection)

time and expense; in addition, a proper factory was lacking, and the project gradually failed.

Permanent agricultural prosperity was based on irrigated land. Most of that land was very productive and, as near as can be ascertained, prior to 1919 the average crop yields per acre by a majority of the farmers were: alfalfa, three and one-half tons; wheat, thirty-three bushels; oats, fifty-five bushels; barley, fifty bushels; corn, forty bushels; and potatoes, 150 bushels. In addition, many varieties of fruit were successfully and profitably raised.

Agricultural marketing and processing had taken a big step forward in 1897 when Jerry Murray purchased a threshing machine and threshed the local wheat crops; William Ashton threshed 2,126 bushels of grain that year. By 1903 another threshing machine threshed 63,930 bushels of wheat. The grain crop of Ashley Valley continued to thrive and was valued at $132,923 in 1915. Potatoes, watermelons, corn, turnips, and apples have been a viable part of the farming enterprise throughout the years.

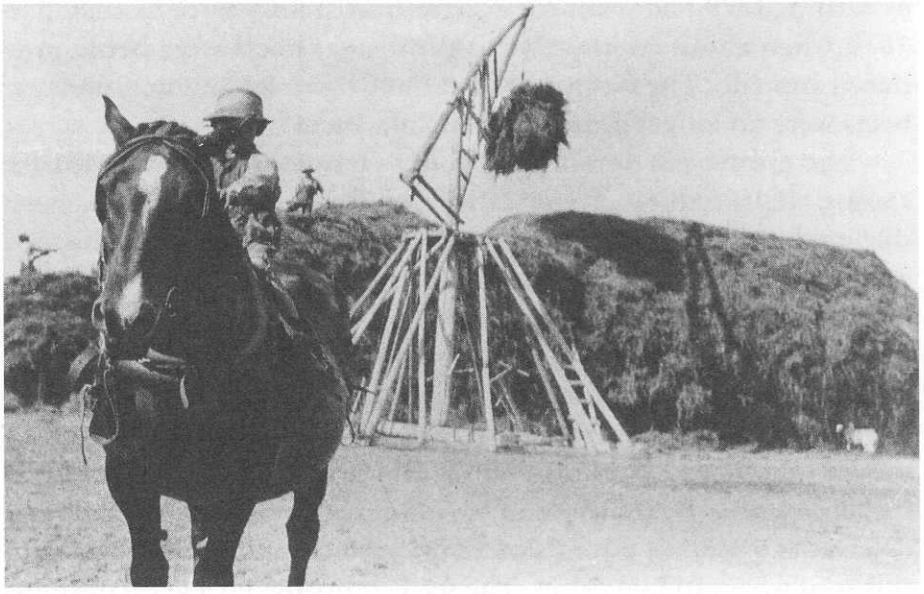
Other crops that grew well in Uintah County included onions, beans, sweet clover, and sugar beets. Sugar beets were raised in Vernal

as early as 1879 and plans for a sugar-beet factory were discussed in 1916 when about twenty-five tons of sugar beets were being produced annually. The factory was not built, however, and in time sugar beets were no longer grown in the Uinta Basin.

The greater portion of the county's irrigated land was used for raising alfalfa and other crops that could be fed to cattle and sheep during the winter months. In 1899 farmers began raising alfalfa seed and freighting it to Meeker, Colorado; by the 1920s it had become big business in the county. Congressman Don Colton promised to fight for an alfalfa-seed experimental wet-and-dry farm. In 1925 a bill was passed in the Utah Legislature through the efforts of T.W. O'Donnell for an $8,000 experimental farm. The J.G. Peppard Seed Company moved into the old Workman Opera House at 40 South 500 West and installed a seed-cleaning plant. By 1926 the Peppard Seed Plant had received 0.5 million pounds of alfalfa seed from basin farmers, and this seed won national prizes. The seed company did a good business with local farmers until 1931, when the Depression made it impossible for farmers to obtain loans from commercial banks to continue purchasing seed for their operations. This forced the Peppard Seed Company out of business. The building was sold in 1935 to Henry Wyman to be once again used as an entertainment center; however, in January 1936 the building burned to the ground.

Apiculture (beekeeping) was prospering at the time of statehood in 1896. In June 1896 C.P. Bartlett left for Leadville, Colorado, with 4,000 pounds of honey. In October 1898 James Hacking made a shipment of 35,000 pounds of honey to Chicago.[13] In 1899 another beekeeper, Franklin Beers, ordered 8,000 gallon cans for honey from tinsmith Robert Witmer. By 1910, 1,360 colonies of bees were located in the county. The honey industry in the county brought in $40,000 in 1914, and ten tons of honey was shipped by parcel post in 1917. Thirty-five hundred colonies of bees were situated in the county in 1928. Bee colonies had decreased to 2,211 in 1960, but many beekeepers are still in operation at present. Due to the abundant sweet clover crop, the bees do remarkably well in the county. Vernal's honey has become known throughout the United States as well as in Europe.

Area farmers organized several times to promote and improve their production. In 1891 the Farmers Alliance Club was organized.



Stacking hay with an "A" derrick and a Jackson fork. Harold Alexander on horse. (UCLRHC, T. G. Alexander collection)

After several months the name was changed to the Farmers Mutual Benefit Equitable Association. In 1909 another group organized the Uintah County Farmer's Association. In June 1917 a chapter of the Farm Bureau was formed with S. D. Colton president in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Extension Division of Utah State Agricultural College, and the county commissioners. The county's best farmers joined. The association was concerned with everything that would improve farming, including irrigation and roads, crop improvement through better seeds, improved marketing and processing facilities, and labor conditions.

Crickets have created havoc with county crops every ten to twenty years from 1878 through the 1990s. Various government agencies have helped area farmers and ranchers combat the problem by spraying and setting up experimental sites. The crickets travel together across the county and appear as thick black carpets often a mile wide. When cars pass through them the road soon becomes slick as if covered by oil. They eat everything in their path. From the beginning, they have been called "Mormon Crickets"; however,

George Miller called them "Sierra Club Crickets" because that club opposed spraying crickets in Dinosaur National Monument because it might affect endangered species. A Vernal woman recalled that in the early 1920s the crickets marched in like an army and to get home the children had to walk through them barefoot, as they had no shoes.[14]

Dry farming has always been successful on Diamond Mountain north of Vernal but not on the more arid Blue Mountain east of Vernal. Beginning in 1918 eighty-five families of homesteaders moved to Blue Mountain with the hope of establishing profitable dry farms. However, a drought hit and crickets invaded. By the early 1930s most of the homesteaders had left the area.

The drought of 1932 and the Great Depression hit county farmers hard, but $738,693 received for wheat allotments from the government helped alleviate the disaster somewhat. The Agriculture Adjustment Administration (AAA) office opened in the county courthouse to administer government money to the farmers. The Federal Resettlement Administration (FRA) also aided county farmers.

In 1937 farm crops were better than they had been for ten years. Farming continued to progress through the 1940s, but gave way to building booms when the oil industry arrived. Crops have diminished throughout the 1980s and 1990s, with farmers selling out to housing and commercial developers and thus decreasing the amount of productive farmland in the area.

Area farmers needed a means of grinding their grain for flour, and the first gristmill was erected between 1870 and 1873 near Whiterocks. John Blankenship helped move the mill into the basin along with Jerry Hough, George Drake, and Ed Williams. The steam-powered mill was operated by Blankenship until the steam boiler exploded and the mill was destroyed.[15]

Several mills were built in Maeser, which for a time was known as "Mill Ward." In 1880 Robert Bodily gave William G. Reynolds forty acres of land for a mill site. William P. Reynolds, father of William G. and Bob Reynolds, assisted with the building of the Reynolds mill, which was completed with one room by Christmas 1880. This mill was run by water power, the water being flumed to the building with about a fifteen-foot fall. The following year another room was built,

which was also used for dancing. Martin Oaks hauled all the logs for this mill. Between 1900 and 1905 the Reynolds mill was purchased by W.D. Fletcher and new machinery was purchased and installed. It then became known as the Farmer's Mill. Reynolds continued to work in the mill until 1920. The mill operated until it was destroyed by fire during the summer of 1934.

In 1888 Lycurgus Johnson, who was in the mercantile business in the town of Ashley, erected a flour mill which he operated until his death in 1908. It was later torn down and sold to N.J. Meagher, who in turn sold it to E.H. Peterson of Duchesne. George Goodrich ran the mill for Johnson for several years. He told a story about an Indian couple who came in for a sack of flour. The Indian told his wife to pack the flour out. Goodrich started giving him a bad time about letting a woman do his work, and so the Indian picked up the sack of flour and put it on his shoulder, but fell and broke his leg. The Indian's wife was furious at Goodrich, so he kept the couple in a spare room at the mill and took care of them for six weeks while the leg healed.

In 1893 a roller mill was built in Vernal by ten investors and operated by James Coupe. It was located near 266 North and 600 West and burned to the ground in April 1900. The Vernal Milling and Light Company erected a flour mill between 400 and 500 North in 1907 which operated until 1946. S.R. Bennion was president, William H. Siddoway was vice-president and manager, Herbert Tyzack was secretary, J.K. Bullock treasurer, and Tom O'Donnell director. The mill was brought into the valley by team and wagon from Watson and traveled across the Green River by ferry. The large white mill was in constant operation from February 1907 until early in 1946, when it was closed for repairs. At this time, E.H. Peterson purchased the old flour mill, which burned down in January 1952. The milling company owned the mill as well as an electric power plant, which was sold to Utah Power & Light Company in 1925.[16]

Creameries, Canning, and Packing Plants

Closely related to the county's agricultural economy were facilities such as creameries and canning and packing plants for processing agricultural products. The dairy industry in the county continued to

grow, and by 1899 there were 459 dairy farms annually producing nearly 450,000 gallons of milk, 80,000 pounds of butter, and slightly more than 3,500 pounds of cheese.[17] To meet the growing production of dairy farmers in the county, the Uintah Creamery Company was built in 1900 at 500 North Vernal Avenue. Sixty-one Vernal stockholders invested $7,500 at twenty-five dollars a share, and a pipeline one-third of a mile in length carried springwater to the tank in the refrigerator room. Drivers with wagons gathered milk from all over the valley.

In November 1911 the Calder Brothers company purchased the Uintah Creamery and in 1912 built a new building and moved the creamery to their ice cream factory and bottling works at 760 North Vernal Avenue. Calders had purchased the Vernal Bottling Works in 1910 and were making and selling ice cream and candy before that time.The company's ice business, which had started around 1900, was the largest in the area.

The Calder creamery did a big business in 1914, with a standing order from Salt Lake City for 1,000 pounds of butter a day. Two thousand tons of ice was also harvested and stored. The following year six million pounds of crystal ice was produced. Ice was delivered on a regular route with two mules from 1906 to 1911, at which time a "delivery auto" was purchased. By 1922 the daily capacity of the creamery was 6,000 pounds of milk and 5,000 pounds of cream. Still, milk supplies were insufficient to make enough butter to fill Denver and Salt Lake City orders. Calder Brothers ice cream and soda pop were shipped from Vernal to Price, Utah, and Craig, Colorado. The company later became involved with the Hi-Land Dairy Association. In 1947 Piedmont Dairy purchased from the Hi-Land Dairy Association the Vernal retail route of Calder Brothers dairy.

In the first part of the century dairy herds were increasing all over the Uinta Basin, bringing a steady payroll to basin farmers. About 4.36 percent of the dairy cows were located in the Vernal area. In 1916 a creamery was opened on the west side at Leeton. The Uinta Creamery opened at Neola and established a cream station in Vernal in 1922. Cream stations were provided by the creameries in order that people could bring in small amounts of cream to sell. The Nelson-Ricks Creamery set up cream-receiving stations at LaPoint

and Vernal in 1935. Other cream stations were located around the county.

Successful garden crops led to the organization of a canning club in 1917 which offered demonstrations on canning. This was soon followed by the launching in 1919 of the Uintah Cannery, a $40,000 project under the direction of C.A. Cawley. It was owned by farmers and businessmen who purchased the old Workman Opera House property. The factory had a maximum daily capacity of 800 cases. Even though there was a short crop due to a drought in 1919, 120,000 cans were filled. The cannery operated until 1921 when it failed and was sold at a sheriff's sale after one of its members embezzled a large sum of money. The bank sold the equipment to regain some of its loss.[18] The J. G. Peppard Seed Company purchased the building in 1925.

Several government cannery projects were opened under New Deal funding in 1935 and 1936 and were operated under the direction of Jenny Weeks and Lola Christensen. These included one at the Vernal Community House and another at Leota. In 1936, 1,444 cans of food were prepared for use in school lunches in the county. Another cannery was located in the green buildings behind the Central School and in 1939 one was located in the Second Ward Scout House. Local residents trying hard to make ends meet during the Depression were very pleased to have the opportunity to use the canneries, and many cans of chili, vegetables, and other items were preserved for personal use.

A packing plant for the Uintah Packing and Provision Company was constructed southeast of Vernal in 1919. The processing capacity of the plant was 5,000 hogs, 3,000 sheep, and 2,000 head of beef per year. Everything was modern for the time, including feeding pens and sheds, a slaughter room, cooling room, fresh-meat cooler, sweet-pickle room for hams and bacon, an egg-and-poultry storage room, large sausage room, and workroom. On the north side of the building were located two smokehouses, and offices were at the front of the building. Eight men were employed permanently, with more during the rush season. The company operated a farmer's market in town to sell its products. The plant failed in 1924 and was sold at a sheriff's sale; Charles Hatch and Charles Howell purchased the market.

In 1907 brothers Elmer, Orlando, and Earnest Eaton began slaughtering and butchering meat in Glines for the several meat markets owned by family members.

Economy Meat & Processing Plant began in a small white building on 135 West Main on 1 September 1943 with LaRell Anderson and Byron Fisher as owners. Six months later, Anderson bought Fisher's share and changed the name to Ashley Meat Products Company. After several fires broke out at this location, the owner decided to move. A new plant was built on 400 North Vernal Avenue in 1947 and the name changed to Uintah Packing Plant. This location supported a much larger operation, and a retail outlet was opened. Anderson ran the plant until October 1971, when he turned it over to his son Don. The plant has had up to twenty employees.

Doctor Farley G. Eskelson started the Sanitary Butchering Company on the Naples Highway with Fred Reynolds as manager. In 1939 Reynolds opened his own shop at 1255 South Vernal Avenue, calling it Reynold's Meat Company. In 1942 he moved the building to 480 North 500 East. Reynolds sold it to Cecil Tungut in 1944, and Tungut later sold to Jess Caldwell. In 1953 A. M. Gray and Delos Reynolds bought the plant and named it Gray's Cutting Plant. Gray sold to Woodey Searle in 1957, and the name was changed to Superior Meat Company. Searle sold his interest to Reynolds, who was the sole owner until 1992 when he turned it over to his oldest son, D.J. Reynolds. The packing plant has had an average of six employees.

Glen's Cutting Plant was opened in Naples by Glen Reynolds in 1957 and operated by him and his wife. Arza Adams also operated a cutting plant in Maeser from about 1965 to 1987, when he sold out to Becky Pinkham.

When the packing houses opened, most people did not own freezers but liked to purchase a whole or half beef because it was cheaper; others raised their own meat and had it slaughtered. Cold-storage lockers were opened around town which customers could rent to store their meat.

Agriculture and related industry were basic factors in the early settlement and growth of Uintah County. With the diversification of the economy, the improvements in transportation, and the growth of

main food source for residents to becoming an important income-producing industry.

ENDNOTES

1. Taken from the official assessment rolls of Uintah County for the respective years by Uintah County Recorder Randy Simmons in 1994.

2. See *Vernal Express*, 27 August 1896, 7 January, 18 February, 4 March, 29 July, 2 and 9 September, 4 November 1897, 3 February, and 29 September 1898.

3. Ibid., 3 February 1898.

4. Sarah Helen Harvey Simmons, "The History of Tridell, Utah," unpublished manuscript, copy located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center, 20.

5. Byron Loosle, "The Ashley National Forest" unpublished manuscript, copy located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

6. In 1981 the state law was changed and livestock was no longer assessed. Totals for swine were not included every year by the author, as in later years they were grouped together with "other animals." The figures do not include wild horses running free on the range. The actual number of all livestock would have been larger, as not all livestock was turned in or picked up by the assessor. The 1879 figure of cattle is an approximate number including cattle in the part of Brown's Park which was in Uintah County and cattle at the Uintah Agency belonging to the Indian agent and workers. The 1993 figures were provided by the Uintah County Agent.

7. Dave Hattis, forester, Ashley National Forest, to author, 6 November 1995, in telephone conversation.

8. Loosle, "Ashley National Forest."

9. Vernal lost one of its most influential citizens when Don B. Colton died in 1952. He had been elected from the first Congressional District in 1920 and served continually for six terms. In 1934 he was a candidate for the U.S. Senate, and in 1940 he entered the race for governor of Utah but was defeated. While a member of Congress, he served as chair of the Public Lands Committee and on the roads committee and the irrigation and reclamation committees. He sponsored much legislation vital to western interests.

10. N.J. Meagher, Jr., telephone interview with author, May 1995.

11. Cliff McCoy, oral interview with Mike Brown, 8 February 1978, tape and transcribed history located in the Uintah County Library.

12. *Vernal Express,* 7 September 1943.

13. Ibid., 18 June 1896 and 13 October 1898.

14. Ibid., 27 July 1923, 24 May 1985, 10 July 1987; Walt Goldsmith, "Wild Old Days," *True West,* July–August 1978, 32.

15. Mable Haube, "Uintah County," unpublished manuscript, copy in Uintah County Library Regional History Center, 7; Wanda Richardson, "John Boner Blankenship," unpublished manuscript, copy in Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 777.

16. *Vernal Express,* 8 December 1938.

17. *Census Reports, Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900. Agriculture* Part I (Washington, D.C., 1902), 576.

18. *Vernal Express,* 8 April, 23 September, 4 November, and 2 December 1921.

5

Booms and Busts

Mining and Petroleum Exploration

Uintah County is noted for its natural resources. Industrial activities have included mining for Gilsonite, coal, copper, iron, oil shale, ozocerite, wurtzilite, and asphalt. Tales of gold in the Uinta Mountains have been numerous. Three of the first settlers—Wilbur Carlson Britt, Finley Britt, and Peter Dillman—came to Utah in 1872 prospecting for gold. Wilbur Britt had been given a map by an old prospector who claimed there was a rich mine near Carter Creek. The men searched until fall; finding no gold, they came over the mountain and lived with Captain Pardon Dodds at Whiterocks that winter, moving to Ashley Valley the following year. Many early settlers and cowboys were part-time prospectors.

By 1888 Gilsonite (a hydrocarbon) had been discovered in the county, and Gilsonite mining was one of the first large commercial undertakings. Local cowboys and Indians had been aware of the black substance from a vein near Fort Duchesne for many years. When John Kelly became the blacksmith for the Indian agency at Whiterocks, he needed coal for the operation of his forge. He described the material to the Indians and asked if any had been seen

in the area. Indian agent J.J. Critchlow and John Blankenship made an examination of the material the Indians told them about and pronounced it to be coal. Critchlow sent a party with a team of oxen to bring a load to the agency. When Kelly tried the Gilsonite in the forge, results were memorable because at the high temperature the ore melted making such a pungent, vile-smelling smoke that Kelly came out of his shop using very expressive language.[1]

George Basor staked out locations of the material, but no land office existed in the basin to file his claim. Bert Seabolt visited the home of Pardon Dodds where Basor was also visiting. Basor brought out several pieces to show Seabolt. Seabolt stated that it was a pure hydrocarbon that he could not classify. He took some of Mrs. Dodds's fresh churned butter and mixed it with the Gilsonite to form a chewing gum that was soon enjoyed by the group. Basor showed Seabolt where the vein of Gilsonite was located, and Seabolt traveled to the land office to make an official filing on the claim, overriding Basor's stake.

About the same time, Sam Gilson also discovered the vein of Gilsonite. Gilson had supplied horses to the Pony Express and was the U.S. marshal who supervised the 1877 execution of John D. Lee for the 1857 massacre of California immigrants at Mountain Meadows. Gilson took several sacks of Gilsonite home and began to experiment with the material. His wife reported that she was not overjoyed with her husband's discovery, since he filled nearly every pan in the house with the messy stuff to carry out experiments. Gilsonite was first (and officially) called "Uintaite," but it later became popularly known as Gilsonite in honor of Sam Gilson. When the Gilson Asphaltum Company was formed, he jokingly offered a silver dollar if they named the stuff after him; this was done and the material has carried his name ever since.[2]

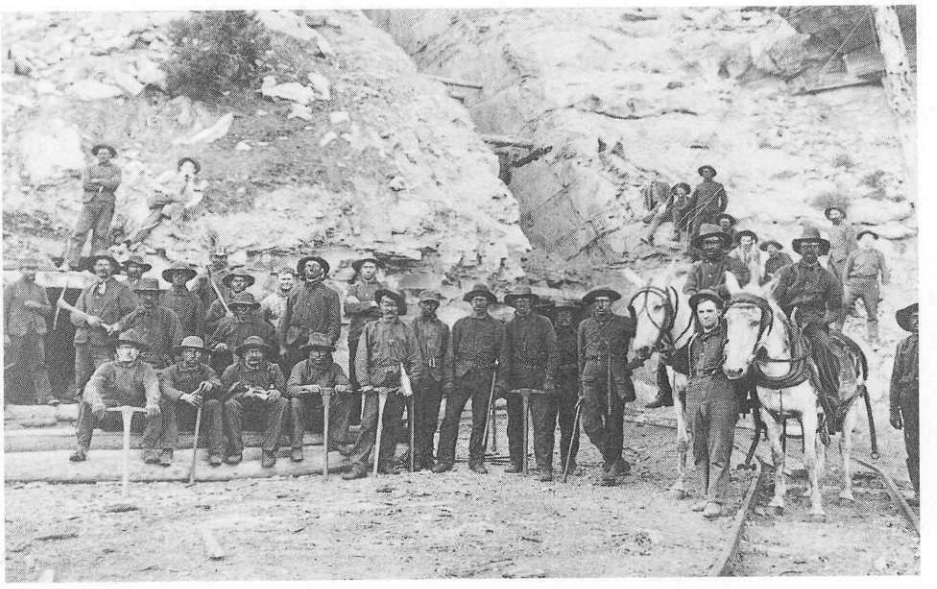
Gilson and Seabolt joined forces to mine Gilsonite. Discovering that the vein was on the Indian reservation, an attorney who was an expert on mining law was retained and some wealthy Park City mine owners joined in the venture. The group traveled to Washington, D.C., to attempt to convince Congress to remove the carbon vein from the reservation. Adolphus Busch of Anheuser-Busch Brewing Company in St. Louis became interested in the black mineral, which

made what some considered to be the finest lacquers, paints, and varnishes in the world and also provided excellent sealing material for beer barrels. Busch added his support to the withdrawal request.[3]

It took an act of Congress plus a treaty with the Utes before the mine was legally acquired. On 24 May 1888, because of the political pressure, Congress removed a triangular area of land containing 7,040 acres from the eastern end of the reservation, providing for a payment of twenty dollars per acre to the Indians. The base of the area ran from east to west and was three miles wide, the north-south boundary line extended six miles. The Gilsonite company built a few shacks to house workers and tools. The ore was freighted by team and wagon to Price, Utah, where it was shipped all over the world. This area became known as the "Strip." A tent town sprang up overnight which became one of the wildest towns in the west. The town was later called Moffat and then Gusher. In 1899 more than 2,000 tons of Gilsonite was shipped from the area. The average price received was fifty dollars per ton at the railroad, and production and hauling costs were twenty-one dollars per ton.[4]

In 1902 pressure from whites again became so strong that by a special act of Congress the privilege of locating 100 mining claims on the Uintah Reservation was given to the Raven Mining Company. Fifty of the claims were to be for elaterite—a type of asphalt—twenty-five were to be for Gilsonite, and twenty-five for precious metals.[5] In 1902 over 20 million pounds of Gilsonite was shipped from the area.[6] In 1903 the Gilson Asphaltum Company paid $1,500 in taxes to the county.

Miners had also discovered veins of Gilsonite east near the Colorado line, and mining camps were started at Dragon, Watson, and Bonanza. It is worthy of note that Gilsonite was responsible for the building of the only railroad to enter the Uinta Basin. In 1904 the Uintah Railway narrow-gauge railroad was installed over Baxter Pass to Dragon. It was later extended to Watson and a spur also went south to the Rainbow mines. The Uintah Railway Company was a wholly owned subsidiary of the Barber Asphalt Paving Company and was built for the sole purpose of hauling Gilsonite to the main D&RGW railroad; however, it transported many other products as well. The mineral could then be shipped without wagon freighting,



1907 Gilsonite miners at Dragon, Utah (UCLRHC collection)

and the mines on the Strip ceased operation. "Slim" Beaslin, local attorney John Beaslin's father, was the railroad conductor and many local men worked for the railroad.

Some immigrants, including Greeks, worked on the railroad as section men, and it is probable that Greeks also worked in the Gilsonite mines. Many Greeks later migrated to Price to work in the coal mines. It has been reported that Chinese laborers were also hired to work in the narrow Gilsonite veins. Their smaller stature made it possible for them to work more easily in the tunnels.[7]

Contemporaneous with the building of the railroad, construction began on a system of toll roads which connected Dragon with Vernal. In addition, telephone and telegraph lines were built. All of these activities were combined under two companies: the Uintah Railway Company and the Uintah Toll Road Company.

In 1928 several companies were active mining and shipping Gilsonite. The Gilson Asphaltum Company (a subsidiary of the Barber Asphaltum Company) was working at Rainbow; the American Asphaltum Company, a St. Louis concern, worked the Bandana and Little Bonanza mines; the Utah Gilson Company operated the Little Emma Mine about twelve miles north of Watson; and

two small companies operated in the central part of the basin, with one mine at Fort Duchesne and another on Castle Peak about twelve miles south of Myton.[8]

The Uintah Railroad was discontinued after an abandonment hearing in January 1939. The main mining operation was moved to Bonanza and the Gilsonite was shipped by truck to Craig, Colorado. It was later transported to a refinery near Fruita, Colorado, using a slurry pipeline. In 1957 a six-inch, seventy-two-mile-long pipeline was extended from the mines to Gilsonite, Colorado, through which ore was shipped in a water slurry. There it was converted into electrode coke and gasoline. Due to the economics of competition with petroleum, the pipeline operation was stopped in 1973 and the plant was sold. In 1979 the American Gilsonite Company completed construction of a modern processing plant to replace existing plants at Bonanza. Today large tanker trucks are loaded at the plant, and haul the ore all over the world. The huge tankers can be driven onto ships and freighted across the ocean. The truckers drive off the ship and deliver the Gilsonite. Several dozen products are made from Gilsonite; they include paints, varnishes, inks, roofing materials, electrical and other insulations, battery boxes, phonograph records, floor coverings, brake linings, caulking material, gilsulate for underground pipe insulation, high-test gasoline, and metallurgical coke. Ninety-five percent of the Gilsonite in the world is found in the Uinta Basin, providing a large part of the economic base of Uintah County.

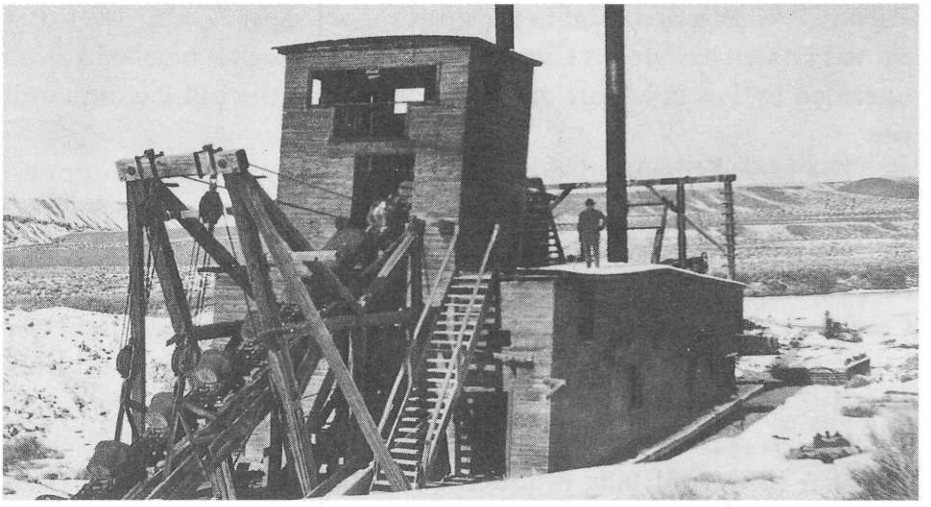
Mining of other minerals also has been important to Uintah County's economic development. Besides the Britts and Dillman, other prospectors were looking for gold prior to 1880. Promising ore was found in the Vortex Cave area, and on 4 June 1880 a meeting was held to organize the ten-mile-square Carbonate Mining District.[9] Officers were elected and a constitution adopted, which among other things, declared, "no Chinaman would be tolerated in the district . . . claim being situated in Carbonate Mining District near Bullion Townsite in Uintah County, Utah Territory."[10] A small mining camp was started when a few log cabins were built; it was christened Camp Fudgy by William. G. Reynolds. Prospectors roamed the mountains in search of wealth. Mining companies, corporations, districts, and partnerships were made and dissolved almost daily. The *Uintah*

Papoose, Vernal's first local newspaper, reported on 22 May 1891 that a town known as Parsons City had been established. It boasted a store operated by Frank Moore and was located on the old Parsons mill site.

The Dyer Mine nestled between Oaks Park and Dyer Mountain in the Uinta Mountains about twenty-six miles north of Vernal was the biggest mine. About thirty families lived near the smelter located on Anderson Creek built in 1889 by the Uintah Copper Summit Company, with Rock M. Pope as foreman. On the average, the Dyer Mine produced 50 percent copper, with some gold, silver, and lead. The gold and silver paid for the production costs of the copper during the first years of operation. Mining at this camp was in full swing between 1887 and 1900, producing more than $3 million worth of high-grade copper. Records show that from 1891 to 1917 the output of ore from this district was 4,377 tons, yielding a return of $395,655 in copper, $63,497 in silver and $18,857 in gold.[11] From 1900 to 1902 about 100 men were employed at the camp known as Bullionville.[12] Most of the ore was hauled over the Carter Military Road in wagons pulled by horses or oxen to Carter Station, Wyoming. Oxen were often used since they could haul heavier loads. In the beginning, some of the ore was hauled through Sears Canyon to Rock Springs.[13] By 1904 the rich ore pockets had been exhausted and mining operations ceased.

In 1928 the Dyer Mine was revived by E.J. Longhurst and George E. Pope, a Vernal miner, who had acquired it for $302.36 at a delinquent-tax sale two years previously. The construction of the Vernal-Manila highway brought the mine to within four miles of an automobile road, and the elimination of only one steep grade was required to enable automobiles to reach the camp. This mining venture did not prove to be a success, however. The mine was closed and Bullionville became a ghost town.

Another mining rush came in 1891, this time on Blue Mountain, where many copper and silver strikes were reported. The *Uintah Papoose* was full of "strike it rich" stories for many years. Most of the finds were pockets rather than veins. Vernal resident Hy Mantle and his brothers did find copper. Their mines were located on a high, steep area called Tanks Peak on the north rim of Blue Mountain. The



Green River Gold Dredge (UCLRHC collection)

location of the mine made it hard to operate, and it was finally leased to Hell's Canyon Copper Company. The company had a large mining camp and operation around 1919, but it was not successful for long. A uranium rush erupted in the 1940s, but that too proved unsuccessful. Other miners have discovered limited quantities of rich copper ore in the area.[14]

Other methods of gold mining also were attempted. The first gold dredge was located along the Green River in Uintah County and it is believed to have been at Basor Bend before the turn of the century. It was owned by an eastern company and was operated by a local family named Mitchell. It has been stated that at one "clean-up" about $1,500 in gold was obtained, but the gold consisted of exceedingly fine flakes, and the venture ultimately was not a success. Ira Burton, Ene Gurr, John McAndrews, and Judge J.T. McConnell were some of the local residents involved with this dredge.[15]

In 1908 an immense dredge was built on the Green River by the Uintah Placer Mining & Exploration Company. It was located between Split Mountain Canyon and the Jensen bridge. Prominent stockholders and officers of the company were from Milwaukee, Salt Lake City, Vernal, and other parts of the country. At least 100 tons of machinery and 100,000 feet of lumber were required to build the frame. The cost of construction and machinery totaled $50,000.

Hopes for the operation were high. N.J. Meagher of the Bank of Vernal purchased considerable gold panned from the vicinity. Mrs. H. C. Rupple of Vernal had in her possession a nugget taken from the craw of a chicken near Island Park above this dredge.[16] Attempts were made with the machinery to recover the fine flour gold from the channel and terrace sands, but this operation also met with little success.

Another attempt to mine gold on the Green River was made in 1913 by the Fine Gold Placer Mining Company below the Jensen bridge at Horseshoe Bend. New equipment was installed and work began with three eight-hour shifts—eight men to the shift. Five more dredges were planned for the area, and it was estimated that work would continue on the vein for fifty years. However, this enterprise also ended in failure.[17]

Asphalt, often referred to as "native asphalt," is another of Uintah County's mineral resources. It is a brown or black tarlike substance, a variety of bitumen. It is found in a natural state in an outcropping about two miles west of Vernal; another deposit is located near Whiterocks. The asphalt deposits near Vernal are found in various states of oxidization—from a thick, tarry semi-liquid like molasses to a sandy material. Several ways of breaking down the substance to obtain the oil have been used, one being hot water. Asphalt has been placed on roads and sidewalks in the county for nearly 100 years. One of the methods used is to mix it with sand and haul it directly to road surfaces where it is spread to a depth of about four inches.

One of the first men to become interested in rock asphalt was Sheriff John T. Pope. He perfected formulas using the product for roofing hundreds of area homes and businesses. He had a laboratory and factory 4.5 miles southwest of Vernal. He was successful in extracting the "gum" from the sand asphalt without the use of fire, and he was the first to use sand asphaltum for paving in Vernal. Hauling the rock from the hills with a team and wagon, he chopped the material with an ax and beat it down with a sledgehammer after it was laid, making a sidewalk at his home in Vernal.

In 1898 the Vernal city council decided to experiment with sand asphaltum to determine the effect of solar rays on it. On 16 August 1898 about twenty tons of asphalt was placed on a Vernal street and

sidewalk. The strip of sidewalk was completed at the cost of $125 and the experiment was considered a success. Further experimenting led to improved ways of using the asphalt to pave streets and sidewalks.

By 1906 Vernal City had acquired a lot at 100 West 100 North where vats were installed to heat asphalt and bids were let for 100 tons or more of asphaltum and ten or more yards of sand to be delivered to the city lot for paving three blocks.[18] In 1924 another plant with six vats was located in the yard of the Uintah Canning Factory (previously Workman's Hall). The asphalt was heated with steam from the boilers and also with a wood fire underneath the vats. The asphalt was spread over the roadbed hot; as it cooled, it was smoothed with a three-ton steamroller. In 1924 an eighteen-foot-wide asphalt strip was laid eight blocks from the center of Vernal to Fifth West and then south to the tabernacle. After ten years, the road was still in excellent condition. This project was completed later under the Federal Emergency Relief Act.[19]

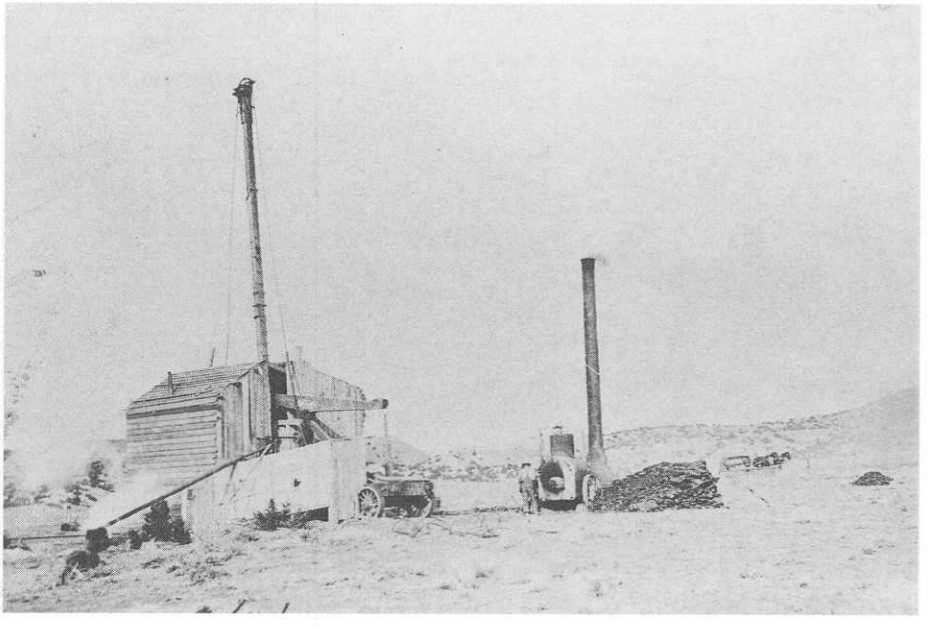
By 1978 Uintah County and Vernal City had leased an open-mine asphalt pit from Sohio Company. Asphalt was also sold to individuals at cost, but all asphalt had to be used in Uintah County. The asphalt is used for private drives, walks, lanes, hard-surface feed lots, playgrounds, tennis courts, and parking lots. Paul Feltch, Uintah County road supervisor, stated in 1992 that of the 375 miles of paved roads in Uintah County only twenty-one are not constructed with native asphalt. Feltch predicted the city's mine had another two years for production. Tests were executed to determine if another layer of tar sands directly under the county's excavation pit would be economical to develop.[20] Drilling down another thirty-two feet beneath the location, enough additional asphalt was located to last four or five more years. Another layer to the northwest was located which is rich in asphalt. It is a dome with fifty or sixty feet of overburden on top of it. It will take two or three more years before workers can expose the asphalt. County workers remove about 50,000 tons of asphalt a year for use on roads. The new road to Bonanza was built with 119,000 tons of asphalt. It was once believed that enough asphalt existed to last more than a hundred years, but in 1995 it was reported that in a few years the county would deplete its available supply of asphalt. In 1996 county commissioners hired geologist Bud



Paving Main Street in 1923 with native asphalt (UCLRHC collection)

Covington to do a study from recent tests made, and he indicated that enough asphalt existed for another forty to fifty years, alleviating commissioners' fears of losing their free source of asphalt. At one time, the county had leases on about nine other sites; however, the commissioners let them expire, believing the county had all the asphalt it needed.[21]

The abundance of Gilsonite, asphalt, and other hydrocarbons, along with the sighting of oil dripping from the crevices of rocks near Vernal, has prompted wildcatting for oil in the county. The first known drilling occurred in 1900. The John Pope #1 Well was drilled to a depth of 1,000 feet, but there were no signs of oil or gas and the well was abandoned. In 1911 the drilling of several other oil and gas wells occurred on Asphalt Ridge near the "Twists" on U.S. 40. These wells also showed no promise and were capped. During World War I, C.J. Neal of Vernal was hired by the Uintah Development Company to drill several wells on the west flank of Asphalt Ridge. Using a cable tool rig, a coal-powered steam boiler, and a wooden derrick, Neal drilled to depths of 1,700 feet. Very small amounts of gas and tarry oil were found in these wells, but Uintah Development decided not to continue its exploration for oil and gas.



Early oil well in Dog Valley, 1912 (UCLRHC, C. J. Neal collection)

These dry oil and gas wells did not deter others from continuing to search for oil and gas. During the 1920s, Earl Douglass, a noted paleontologist and discoverer of dinosaur fossils in Jensen, became a spokesman for further oil exploration in the county. His knowledge of geology and his scientific investigations in the county and elsewhere in the Uinta Basin convinced him that the region contained an abundance of oil.[22] His assessment proved correct—in April 1925 a 10-million-cubic-foot gas gusher was struck between Vernal and Jensen near Ashley Creek. The Ashley Field was the first major producer of gas in the county and in eastern Utah.

Oil developers were optimistic, and the next three years saw work being completed on Neal Dome. The Maud-Ellen Oil Company began drilling in Steinaker Draw, the Nevada Company began two wells seven miles southwest of Vernal, and Utah Oil Company also began drilling. Some 15,000 acres near Vernal were tested for gas. In 1929 it was announced that no test wells would be drilled near Vernal as there was a declining market for oil. The same year, forty oil permits were revoked by the General Land Office. Although Rangely, Colorado, to the east had some activity through the 1930s, very little

oil activity occurred in the county through the Depression years until 1940 with advent of World War II.

When big oil-producing wells were drilled in the county in the 1940s, petroleum became one of Vernal's major industries. Since that time, oil and gas have provided both good times and lean times for the people of the county, who began to rely on the petroleum industry. Between 1945 and 1947 Standard Oil of California, Pure Oil, Continental Oil, Gulf Oil, Carter Oil, and Union Oil showed interest in the Uinta Basin. In 1948 oil was found in commercial quantities, climaxing a search of nearly half a century. Equity Oil Company, a Utah-based enterprise under the leadership of pioneer oil man J.L. Dougan of Salt Lake City, guided the first successful well into production. It produced 300 barrels a day.

When Equity hit oil, the boom was unleashed. In the next seven years major oil companies opened several fields in Ashley Valley and the Uinta Basin. By 1949 Uintah County had twenty-six producing oil wells, and the Gusher and Roosevelt oil fields were opened in the Green River Formation. Drilling began in the Red Wash Oil and Gas Field in 1951 and in Walker Hollow Field in 1953. These openings brought the boom to a head. Three hundred families moved to Vernal in 1955.

The year 1958 saw several important developments for Uintah County's mineral industry. First, the search for oil and gas, which had dropped off during the past several years, surged to a new level. Second, oil-shale lands were leased for the first time. Third, large-scale testing of phosphate ore from the Brush Creek area was undertaken to determine its commercial feasibility, while drilling and testing continued on oil-bearing sands on Asphalt Ridge.

In the following years, the county's economy fluctuated with the activity in the oil fields, which had a record high production in 1985. Since that time, however, oil production has slowly declined year by year; by 1992, 238 wells had been shut down, and twenty of these were abandoned or plugged. Revenue from oil suffered further when Uintah County had to repay some of its revenues from the oil industry as a result of a tax dispute settled in 1992 with major oil companies in Utah who charged that the county had over-taxed them since 1988. The settlement cost Uintah County about $300,000, and local

property taxes increased due to the reduction of residential property exemptions.[23] The low price of oil worldwide contributes to the oil industry's continued slump in the county.

Uintah County has been famous not only for its oil but also for its natural gas. By 1929, four years after gas was discovered in the Ashley Valley Field, lines were installed and natural gas was supplied to the town of Vernal and Ashley Valley. It was estimated that enough gas existed in the wells to provide gas locally for forty years; however, by January 1941, because of the lowering of the pressure of the gas due to infiltration of water into the Valley Fuel Supply Company wells, it was necessary for the Uintah Gas Company to restrict the use of large consumers. As the gas supply continued to decrease, the company applied to the Public Service Commission in October 1941 to discontinue gas service in Uintah County. Despite much protest, residents were forced to change to butane or revert back to coal after twelve years of natural-gas service.

Fifteen years later, in 1956, El Paso Natural Gas Company began building a pipeline from the Canadian border to New Mexico. A regional transmission pipeline through the northeast portion of the basin made natural gas once again available to the area. Two major oil companies announced tests for petroleum in the revival of activity. Utah Gas Service began installing lines to serve the county population with natural gas. This service provided many jobs as it took two years to complete the lines to homes and businesses. The gas was turned on in 1958.

Mountain Fuel Supply Company explored Uintah County during the 1950s in search of natural gas. Gas was discovered by the company in 1960 in the western part of the county. A permanent office and warehouse was set up in 1961 and the company joined with Utah Natural Gas Company (a subsidiary of El Paso Natural Gas Company) to build 103 miles of twenty-inch pipeline westward from the gas-producing fields to a connection with an existing eighteen-inch pipeline at the Clear Creek gas field in northwestern Carbon County. This natural-gas transmission line had to be buried under the Green River, eased down a precipitous 43 degree slope some 1,400 feet into Nine Mile Canyon, bored under a transcontinental highway and railroad, and snaked up through mountainous terrain to its ter-

minus at the Clear Creek gas field. In 1965 Mountain Fuel joined in a project building a pipeline to Bonanza.[24]

In 1974 the government felt El Paso had created a monopoly and ordered a downsizing of the company. At that time Northwest Pipeline purchased a portion of El Paso's pipeline.[25] Utah Gas Service (which is now owned by the Cordillera Corporation) owns the Altonah and Bluebell gas fields. In 1974–75 a pipeline was built through LaPoint to Vernal. Since that time, most of the natural gas distributed in the area by Utah Gas Service has come from that source rather than from Northwest Pipeline, although some is still purchased from Northwest Pipeline and from a few small companies.

In 1984 government regulations prompted Mountain Fuel to organize a holding company—Questar Corporation. Companies could no longer buy, sell, and transport gas as Northwest had been doing. At that time, Northwest became a transport company only and Williams Field Service took over the buying and selling of gas. Mountain Fuel Supply Company became responsible only for the local distribution (retail) networks. The transmission of gas through interstate pipelines was moved under Mountain Fuel Resources, with an office in Vernal. Drilling and production was moved to Wexpro Company and Celsius Energy Company. Uinta Basin has become mostly a gathering area where natural gas is placed in the pipeline at Red Wash and transported to other parts of the country. In 1988 Mountain Fuel Resourses was renamed Questar Pipeline Company. Forty people currently (1995) work out of Questar's Vernal office.[26]

In August 1990 Questar Pipeline completed an eighty-one-mile, twenty-inch-diameter pipeline linking its northern and southern systems. The $25 million pipeline, also known as Main Line 80, linked the Fidlar Compressor Station in the Uinta Basin with Kastler Station at the Clay Basin underground storage reservoir in Daggett County. This allowed the company to balance gas flows between the northern system and the southern system. (The northern system flows from northwestern Colorado and southwestern Wyoming into northern Utah via Parley's Canyon and Emigration Canyon. The southern system flows via the Uinta Basin and Carbon County into Utah County.)[27]

Today, with modern technology, things change daily as brokers

buy and sell gas. A computer bulletin board is available, so a company that needs gas can see which company is selling at the lowest price. Gas ordered is then placed in a transport line and delivered to the company. The system is becoming more complicated, and it is not known from day to day if Uintah County is getting gas from the Uinta Basin gasfields or from distant fields; nor is it known to what locations Uinta Basin gas is being distributed. The network of natural-gas pipelines crisscrossing the Uinta Basin has provided numerous jobs not only building the pipelines but in workforces hired by transmission and distribution companies.

Gas- and oil-related businesses are located throughout the Uinta Basin, especially on the Naples Industrial Strip. The boom and bust periods of the oil industry have affected many aspects of the county's economy, including housing construction, schools, trucking, and mercantile outlets.

Early cowboys discovered another substance that amazed them. When certain rocks were placed around campfires, liquid oozed from these rocks into the cooking fires, burning better than coal oil. This magic rock was oil shale. Ute Indians had known about the black rock for a long time. A legend was told of Mike Callahan, who built a new cabin with a rock fireplace, not knowing he was building the fireplace out of oil shale. When he lit the first fire, it burned down the cabin.

Talk of oil-shale development in the Uinta Basin was being printed in the local paper and experts were coming to the area to collect samples for testing as early as 1917. One article stated that a local company had been organized to work oil-shale property near Watson in the larger oil-shale territory along White River and in Hell's Hole Canyon, which was said to be one of the richest bodies of oil-shale deposits in the world. The newspaper reported that a new reduction plant would be built near Watson. Four tons of shale was shipped to England for testing.[28]

In 1921 a tower was built in Agency Draw, east of Willow Creek in Uintah County, for a retort plant. The project was begun by R.S. Collett, who reported the project in the *Salt Lake Mining Review* on 30 April 1921. He had a crew of eighty men at work on a fifty-mile road from Rainbow to Agency Draw. By 1922 the journal noted that

successful preliminary tests had been completed. A fifteen-man crew worked at the retort. The shale was blasted from nearby quarries and hauled to the retort, where pinion was burned to heat the shale. However, the oil produced had to be shipped fifty miles over the wagon road Collett had built to the railhead at Watson, and, as that proved to be unfeasible, the operation was discontinued.[29]

Western oil shale is a form of limestone called maristone, which contains incompletely formed oil in a solid form. This solid, kerogen, is composed of the remains of dead plants and animals deposited eons ago in Lake Uinta, which extended over parts of Utah. This organic matter was later covered with volcanic ash and sedimentary deposits from nearby mountains. Sufficient heat and pressure were present to allow the formation of oil shale but not enough to develop crude oil.

It was not until the 1970s that companies again seriously began to explore oil-shale production in the area. The U.S. government became involved in methods of extraction of oil shale due to concern over worldwide supplies. It was thought that the U.S. should not be totally dependent upon foreign oil in case of emergencies, and it was also politically expedient to keep gasoline prices as low as possible at the pump by trying to make available increased supplies of oil.

Prior to the early 1920s, individuals could stake claims on oil-shale land; but after that time the government only allowed such land to be leased. No such leases had been granted to 1970. After much pressure, in 1974 the Department of Interior leased two 5,200–acre-tracts in Utah to Phillips Petroleum Company, Sunoco Energy Development Company, and Sohio Shale Oil Company, which later joined together to form the White River Shale Company.

The U.S. government under the leadership of President Jimmy Carter created the Syn Fuels Corporation (SFC) in 1980 to stimulate a domestic alternative energy industry. The SFC could guarantee loans or provide guaranteed prices making it possible for the oil-shale companies to secure the large loans necessary to construct a synthetic fuels production facility. Several projects had been announced as early as 1976, including plans to build a reduction plant separating potash from the oil shale. Other oil-shale developers in the area were Paraho, Syntana, Magic Circle, Texaco, Exxon,

Tosco, Ramex, and Geokinetics. By 1982 White River Shale began construction of a mine to start developing its oil-shale tracts. The media focused on its ambitious plans—$100 million was to be spent in 1982–83—but no oil was ever produced.

Geokinetics, Inc., a small company which had lost out in the bid for government leases, leased land from the state of Utah and developed and operated an extraction facility for ten years. Mike Lekas invented a process to retreive oil from shale, and Geokinetics became the first company to produce commercial quantities of oil—250,000 barrels. The military tested the product at Hill Air Force Base and certified its quality. Geokinetics built a plant seventy miles south of Vernal called Kamp Kerogen, which originally consisted of three tents and outdoor cooking and eating facilities. The camp grew to a small town with a permanent population of thirty persons.

However, by 1984 the air had gone out of the oil-shale balloon. After the foreign oil cartel weakened and oil was again plentiful, in 1985, under President Ronald Reagan, the U.S. discontinued the Syn Fuels Corporation and its support of the expensive oil-shale production projects. The big oil companies also found it was unproductive due to the low price of oil to secure oil from shale and their projects were also discontinued. White River Shale turned its leases back to the government and went out of business without anything to show for its millions spent. Geokinetics also discontinued its oil-shale program and transferred its energy to conventional oil and gas activities.

The failure to continue the oil-shale activity created economic problems, as the Deseret Power Plant had been constructed with the intention of supplying electricity to the oil-shale operations. The tremendous growth that was anticipated and begun also created social and economic problems in the county's towns.[30]

Oil was also found in saturated oil sands near Dragon, Whiterocks, and Powder Springs southeast of Jensen. In 1918 John Pope attempted to develop saturated oil sands by means of tunneling instead of drilling. It was Pope's idea to tunnel under the sands and bring the oil to the surface by means of gravity rather than by pump. The plan worked successfully and tunnels were built at other locations, but production was low and the project was finally abandoned.[31] Although methods of extracting tar sands have not yet

proven feasible, the potential remains great. The largest single deposit of bituminous sandstones—tar sands—in the United States is found in the Uinta Basin. Further research may yet unlock the more than 11 billion barrels of oil estimated to be in the tar sands of the Uinta Basin.[32]

Another rich mineral resource which has contributed to the economy of the county is phosphate, which was discovered by J.H. Ratliff thirteen miles north of Vernal on Brush Creek in 1915. Knowing the government was going to withdraw the area to be a part of the Uinta National Forest, he and his partner A.E. Humphrey filed a patent and rushed to stake claims. Ratliff stated that there was more than 3.5 billion tons of phosphate rock in the Vernal field, which it was estimated could supply the phosphate (fertilizer) needs of the United States for more than a century. However, development was minimal until the San Francisco Chemical Company became interested in the operation, shipping out 15,000 tons of phosphate ore from the Brush Creek bed to Leefe, Wyoming, for testing in 1958.

San Francisco Chemical acquired the deposit from Ratliff and Humphrey in early 1959 and built the Harry Ratliff Concentrating Plant in 1960. Manager D.L. "Scotty" King stated: "The Brush Creek beds are the biggest continuous deposit in the west. Having an industry 150 miles from a railroad will definitely limit industrial growth."[33] At that time, an attempt was again made—unsuccessfully—to bring the railroad to Vernal. More than 200 employees were eventually employed at the plant with an annual payroll in excess of one million dollars. In 1965 the company produced over 180,000 tons of concentrate, and it continued to expand through the next few years.

In 1969 Stauffer Chemical Company purchased the phosphate plant and began a huge expansion. The plant began production in July and operated on a 300,000–ton yearly production basis running three eight-hour shifts per day, seven days a week. In 1980 Chevron purchased the mine and plant and upgraded production with new installations that increased output from 450,000 to 750,000 tons of phosphate a year. In 1981, 110 persons were employed at the Brush Creek plant. Phosphate was hauled out of the county in trucks to Heber, Phoston, and Garfield, Utah, by W.S. Hatch Trucking Company. About twenty-four trucks were in operation locally. In

1986 a slurry line was completed which pumps the material over the Uinta Range to a refinery in Rock Springs, Wyoming. Farmland Industries, Inc., and J.R. Simplot Company, under the name S. F. Phosphate, are the present owners, having purchased the company from Chevron in April 1992. The company mined 2.7 million tons of phosphate in 1995, employing 125 people.[34]

The county contains other minerals which have been mined. Several uranium mining claims were developed in the eastern portion of the county on Blue Mountain near the Utah-Colorado line. In 1954 twelve uranium claims sold in the Davis Ward area southeast of Vernal for $50,000. Excellent silica deposits exist in the area, but have had little development. A good grade of hematite iron in fairly large deposits as well as elaterite and ozokerite exist in Uinta Basin, but these have remained undeveloped.[35]

Coal mining has been a major economic activity in the county, with more than 20,000 acres of coal lands having been taken up in mining claims by 1903. Within a few miles of Vernal vast deposits of coal were discovered, and for more than thirty years this fuel was systematically mined. The coal was hauled by team and truck, and the operation of the mines gave employment to many county men. Many of the first settlers operated private coal mines. Captain Pardon Dodds had a mine on his property east of the Rock Point Canal, but it was never mined commercially. Four of the main area mines—Pack-Allan, North Star, Gray's, and Farmer's—were within a few miles of Vernal. The Bluebell, Collier, and Dudley mines were located on Brush Creek.

The Brush Creek mines were first opened by Wilson Boan, who mined on the lower end of his farm exclusively for home use. It is thought that the first area mine to operate for commercial use was the Ike Burton Mine. A great amount of coal was shipped from this mine before Archie Weeks purchased it to fuel his gypsum plant on Kabell Hill. Weeks closed the gypsum plant about 1921 and the mine was then sold to Thomas E. and Carson Kidd. Coal was sold from the mine for many years before it was abandoned.[36] Walter and Frank Collier opened a mine north of the Burton mine and in 1918 purchased the north half of the Burton section. The owners operated the mine until they found it impossible to hire laborers, then sold it to



Delivering coal to Vernal area (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne collection)

White and Leaon Ainge. By 1947 this was the only mine in the Brush Creek area that was still operating.

Coal Mine Basin west of Maeser contained the most commercial mines in the county. Before soldiers came to Fort Thornburgh, William Reynolds, Otto Peterson, George Brown, and B.N. Reynolds opened the first coal mine in Coal Mine Basin; it was called the Mill Mine because it was owned by the owners of the Reynolds' Mill. In 1904 Charles C. Rich took over the mine and later sold it to George and Ferre Young, who sold it to the Pack-Allan Mine Company. In 1904 this mine employed fourteen men and produced twenty tons of coal per day. The company provided boarding houses and often fed twenty-four men a day. By 1911 twenty families were living at the location and seventy-five men were employed at the mine with five regular delivery teams. It produced most of the coal mined in the area, although some other mines were active in Coal Mine Basin. During the thirty-three years of its operation, more than 115,000 tons of coal were taken from the Pack-Allan Mine.

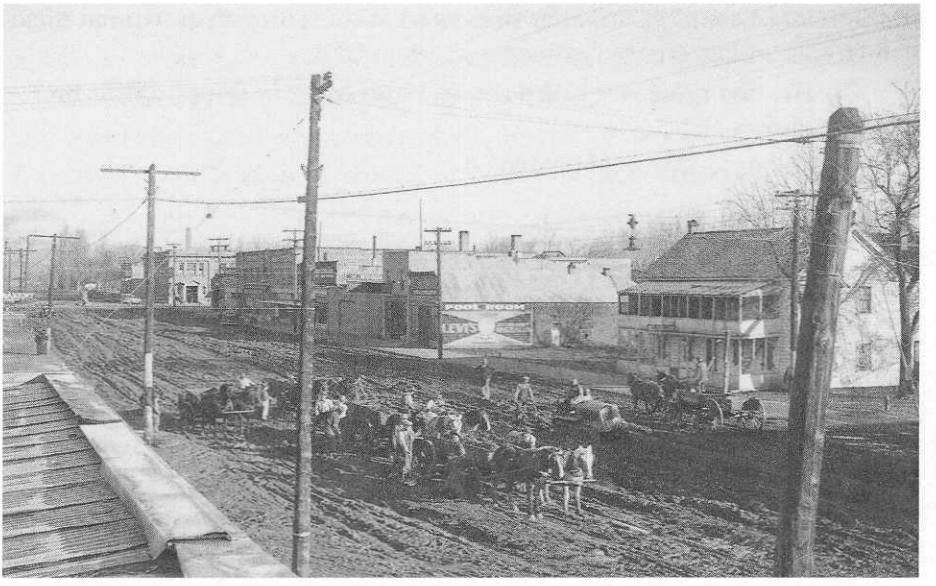
Al Timothy developed several coal mines in Coal Mine Basin before selling out to Phillip Stringham, who leased them to several independent coal miners. In 1915 Stringham sold out to Lawrence Wardle. Joe and Charlie Rich as well as Al and Ren Hatch also mined

coal in Coal Mine Basin. By 1914 twenty-four coal miners were working Joe Rich's mine. Mary Rich Freeman, Rich's seventeen-year-old daughter, cooked for the miners. The Rich mine was one of the biggest producers of coal in the county; up to forty tons of coal were mined daily. Coal sold for four dollars a ton and miners received eighty-five cents per ton for their labor. Because of small seams of coal, short tunnels, often only six feet high, were dug. Smaller horses were used to pull the mine cars. In the Wilson Boan Mine on Brush Creek, the tunnels were so low that burros were used. Ownership of the Rich Mine changed hands several times. Rich sold to Harvey Tucker, who sold to H.H. Norgard. By 1940 Lawrence and Lowell Wardle owned the mine.

Ed Gray opened a mine in Coal Mine Basin which he later sold to Nelson Weeks. Many of the different mines' tunnels became interconnected. Gray's original mine was abandoned in 1935 after the bins and tipple were destroyed by fire. Lawrence Wardle ran his mine until 1957, at which time coal was selling for ten dollars a ton.

The Farmer's Mine in Coal Mine Basin was a co-op mine owned by several farmers in the county until it was sold to W.L. Fletcher. Martin Fletcher later purchased the mine from his father. During the early operation of these mines and especially during the Depression of the 1930s, mine owners bartered much of the coal for produce or other goods. The owners did not become rich, but their families were fed.

On the west side of the county a mine was opened by the federal government to supply coal to the Uintah-Ouray Indian agencies and schools as well as to the residents of the agency. White people ran the mine and sold the coal. Later, private parties dug a coal mine not far from the Government Mine, which was later condemned and closed. Clarence Jensen and Floyd Warburton opened mines at Little Water, and Henry Lee also opened a mine. The Lee Mine and the Jensen Mine operated for several years. Before the mine owners bought trucks and began delivery of the coal to schools, places of business, and residences, individuals drove their teams and wagons to the mines and hauled the coal home. World War II contributed to the demise of area coal mining as many mine workers left for military service. The availability of natural gas in 1928 seriously curtailed the market for coal.



Road work in preparation for first paving of South Vernal Avenue. (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne Collection)

In addition to the industries' contribution to the general economy of the county through wages and consequent purchasing of goods and services, taxes on mining and petroleum ventures have been a significant source of revenue for the county. As early as the 1880s money was paid to the local government, and in 1900 these monies helped fund a building boom which included a new courthouse at a cost of $16,000 and large brick schoolhouses at Central, Naples, Glines, and Jensen. Estimates from the local Job Service office indicate that, in 1995, 30 percent of jobs in Uintah County were related to mining and petroleum and between 35 to 40 percent of county wage income is generated by these industries. Development of natural resources continues to have a tremendous impact on the county's economy

ENDNOTES

1. Major B. H. Roberts, unpublished paper delivered at 24 July celebration in Vernal, Utah, in 1919; copy located in the Regional History Center of the Uintah County Library (UCL).

2. Robert E. Covington, "A Brief History of Early Mineral Exploitation

in the Uinta Basin," 1, 4, paper presented at the Thirteenth Annual Field Conference of Petroleum Geologists in 1964; UCL.

3. The first mine was called the St. Louis Mine in honor of this brewing company.

4. Covington, "Brief History," 4.

5. Ibid.

6. *Vernal Express*, 11 January 1902.

7. Robert E. Covington presented this information at a Uintah County Historical Society Meeting on 10 June 1995. In January 1996 in a personal interview with the author, Covington said he had been told about Chinese miners working in the Gilsonite mines by many old-time miners in the early years of his career.

8. "Facts about the Uinta Basin," 21, brochure-program of 1928 Uinta Basin Industrial Convention, UCL.

9. Uintah County Court record book (handwritten) for 1880, located in District Court storeroom at Uintah Courthouse, Vernal.

10. George E. Pope, "Report on Dyer Mine," 6, unpublished manuscript, copy held in Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

11. *Vernal Express*, 13 December 1928.

12. The early county records refer to Bullion townsite. On a 1905 U.S.G.S. map, no such name as Bullionville is indicated, but three buildings are shown at the site. The name Bullionville is on the present U.S.G.S. map, and a CCC Camp was located there in 1933. It may be that the townsite was called Bullion and the CCC camp was called Bullionville.

13. *Vernal Express*, 18 September 1947, 8. Also see UCL Regional Center History folder 1394.

14. "Family History of Heber Timothy," unpublished manuscript copied from his record book by his granddaughter Geraldine La Rue Timothy Carroll, copy held in Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

15. *Builders of Uintah*, comp. by Daughters of Utah Pioneers of Uintah County (Springville, UT: Art City Publishing Co., 1947), 286.

16. *Vernal Express*, 23 October 1908.

17. Ibid., 25 July 1913.

18. Ibid., 11, 18, and 25 August 1898, and 6 October 1906; personal interview of author with Ralph Siddoway 26 July 1994.

19. *Vernal Express*, 28 June 1934.

20. Ibid., 23 December 1992.

21. Paul Feltch, Uintah County road supervisor, interview with by author 26 July 1994. See also *Vernal Express*, 13 March 1996.

22. Walter Jones, "The Growth of Utah's Petroleum Industry," *Beehive History* 16 (1990): 21–22.

23. Mike Wilkins, Uintah County Clerk's office, interview with author, 1995.

24. *Vernal Express*, 21 December 1961 and 4 November 1965.

25. Randy Dearth, telephone interview with author, 9 June 1995.

26. Steve Chapman, Mountain Fuel Supply Company, telephone conversation with author, followed by a letter dated 20 June 1995, written by David Hampshire of Questar Corporation.

27. David Hampshire to Doris Burton, 20 June 1995.

28. *Vernal Express*, 7 December 1917.

29. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 February 1974, copy containing picture located in folder 574 in UCL Regional History Center.

30. Kevin Millecam, "Oil Shale," *Midflight*, May/June 1983, 15; Jim Lekas, telephone and fax correspondence with author, 5–6 May 1996; Charles Henderson, interview with author, 5 May 1996, UCL.

31. *Salt Lake Tribune*, 21 July 1918.

32. Utah Energy Office, "Utah Energy Developments, A Summary of Existing and Proposed Activity, 1981–1990," 1981; copy of report in UCL.

33. *Vernal Express*, 22 December 1960.

34. Ibid., 1 May 1996.

35. "Facts about the Uinta Basin," 21.

36. *Builders of Uintah*, 284–85.

6

From Sagebrush to Shopping Centers

COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

Soon after settlers established homes in the county, they set about establishing means of exchanging goods. Two businesses that soon appeared were the trading post or general store and the saloon. In the town of Ashley, Pardon Dodds and James Gibson began trading posts. Several saloons soon came into existence, all bringing trade and money into the county. Each outlying settlement developed in a similar manner. Throughout the years many establishments have been organized to serve the county. The first general merchandise store in Vernal was erected by John A. Blythe and Thomas L. Mitchell; it also became the post office. In 1889 John Thomas McKeachnie opened a large general merchandise store in Glines at what is now called McKeachnie Corner (1500 South and 1500 West). The main road into Vernal passed by the store in the early days.

The Ashley Co-operative Mercantile Institution was organized in 1881. The one-story, log-and-rock building was twenty by thirty feet. Its first manager was William Ashton and the first clerks were Philip Stringham and B.O. Colton. The store soon prospered in thriving Ashley Valley. The old co-op building was torn down and a new one

built in 1900 at 4 West Main; it is one of the few landmarks left in the county today. The Ashley Co-op was in business until 1932. The new two-story structure boasted an ornamental iron-and-glass front. It was a general merchandise store and included grocery, meat, dry goods, hardware, shoe, and mens' furnishings departments.

A place was needed for area residents to deposit and exchange money, obtain loans, and make investments, so the LDS church presidency sent Samuel Roberts Bennion to Vernal on 24 September 1886 to assist the people of the valley in handling their money through the Ashley Co-op. By 1903 the volume of money being deposited was more than the co-op could handle. This led to the establishment of a separate banking institution—the Bank of Vernal—organized in 1903. The investors set out to find a manager and cashier. N.J. Meagher was teaching business at All Hallows College in Salt Lake City and working as a bookkeeper at the Bank of Commerce and Utah Savings and Trust Company; he was hired as cashier-manager of the new bank. The bank was then organized with S. M. Browne, president; William Porter Coltharp, vice-president; N. J. Meagher, cashier-manager; and Samuel R. Bennion, Harden Bennion, and John R. Reader, directors. The bank was first housed in a portion of the co-op building.

The first customers of the bank were cowboys, sheepmen, and homesteaders who traded in gold and silver coin. An important source of money was government payments to Ute Indians. As some Indians could not read the figures on paper currency, gold and silver coins were shipped to the bank in strong-boxes on buckboard wagons. Heavy sacks of coins were a discouraging load for robbers who traveled only on horseback.[1] The bank included a bulletproof screen surrounding its steel-lined counter and a large walk-in vault, which remains in the building today at 18 West Main.

When the Bank of Vernal was organized, most of the organizers were non-Mormon; manager N.J. Meagher was an Irish Catholic. A few Mormons such as S.R. Bennion were on the board. Late in 1909, after William H. Smart became president of the LDS Uintah Stake, considerable dissatisfaction with the policies adopted by the bank erupted within the Mormon section of the community. The Vernal Milling and Light Company had applied to the Bank of Vernal for



Uintah State Bank building which also housed the post office and Vernal Drug. (UCLRHC, C. J. Neal collection)

additional credit and, though not refused, the conditions imposed and the attitude of the bank directors was such that the company procured the loan from S.R. Bennion personally. A decision was made to establish another bank. S.R. Bennion was at this time president of the Bank of Vernal; however, he was very much dissatisfied with the attitude of directors J.H. Reader, W.H. Coltharp, and N.J. Meagher, and he advocated and aided the establishment of Uintah State Bank.[2]

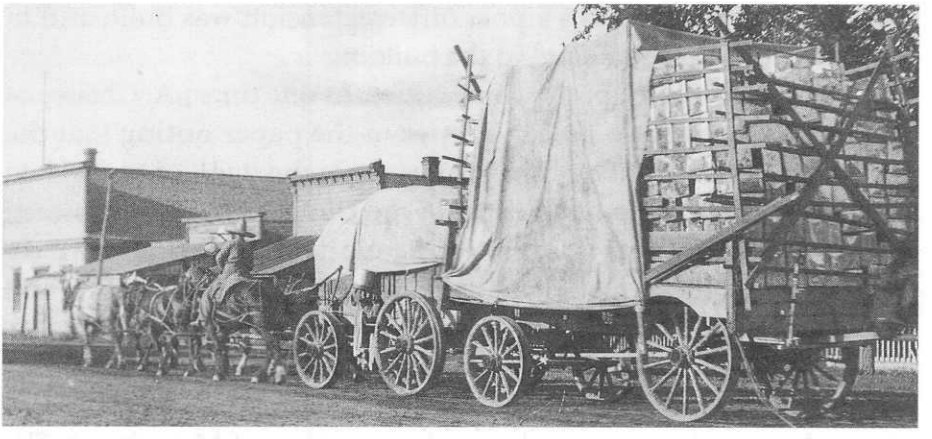
Plans for Uintah State Bank progressed, and L.W. Curry, a merchant from Ouray, was chosen as cashier; E.H. Belcher, a post office employee, was hired as assistant cashier. The bank was temporarily quartered in the Peironet building located on the southeast corner of the main intersection of Vernal. The Uintah State Bank formally opened for business on 10 August 1910, with the following board of directors: William H. Smart, W.H. Siddoway, Edward D. Samuels, J.K. Bullock, George E. Adams, H.W. Woolley, and W.M. McCoy. An architect was hired to draw plans for a new building to be located across the street from the original bank. Construction of the building began in the fall of 1913, and in September 1915 the bank moved

into the building. In 1916 a post office extension was built, and in 1917 Vernal Drug was added to the building.

The two banks were very competitive. At one time J.A. Cheney of the Uintah State Bank placed a letter in the paper noting that the Uintah State Bank had no foreclosures while the Bank of Vernal had seventeen. The 1941 annual report of the Uintah State Bank claimed that the Bank of Vernal was foreclosing mortgages nearly every term of court while the Uintah State Bank had only had two foreclosures in the past twelve years.[3]

By 1916 the Bank of Vernal officers decided it should move. A large new structure to be faced with 80,000 textured bricks was planned across the street on the southwest corner of Main Street. The bricks cost only seven cents each, but freight charges to haul them the 175 miles from Salt Lake City to Vernal were four times that much, so William H. Coltharp came up with the brilliant idea to mail them! A fifty-pound package could be sent parcel post from Salt Lake City for only fifty-two cents, less than half the freight charge. Coltharp traveled to Salt Lake City to order the brick. Forty tons of brick were wrapped at the Parker Lumber Company and put into fifty-pound bundles. The brick had to go 407 miles by standard-gauge railroad to Mack, Colorado, then, by narrow gauge, sixty miles to Watson, Utah, where the railroad ended. The final sixty-five miles to Vernal was by freight wagons over rough roads and by ferry over the Green River. The brick was delivered in the spring and the roads were muddy. The bank directors asked the postmaster if the packages could be delivered directly to the bank site, but he insisted the brick had to come to the post office with each package going over the counter and being stamped. When the crates began to pile up in the mud, the postmaster changed his mind and delivered them to the site, coming there to stamp them.

Because the wagon journey to Vernal took four days each way, mountains of brick were piling up. A frantic postmaster in Mack, Colorado, telegraphed Washington for help. Postal regulations were immediately changed to limit the total weight of any parcel-post shipment in one day to 200 pounds; but it was too late to remedy the situation, as the last brick were already en route to Vernal. Eventually the brick were all delivered and became a unique part of county his-



A freight wagon loaded with brick for the Bank of Vernal. (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne collection)

tory—the "building shipped by mail," also known as the "Parcel Post Bank."

During the "boom" years of the 1980s several other banks opened in the county including Walker Bank and Trust, Basin State Bank, Deseret Federal Savings & Loan, First Interstate Bank of Utah, and American Savings and Loan. All had closed by 1995 except the two original banks.

Besides the Ashley Co-op, several other mercantile businesses came into existence. One was a mercantile business of brothers Ren and Alva Hatch, who constructed a brick building about 1885. It was later torn down to make room for the Cobble Rock Station. Another early landmark was the Coltharp Building built in 1893 which housed the Coltharp Mercantile Company owned by William H. Coltharp and Isaac Burton, Sr. It was located at 3 West Main, where the Bank of Vernal was later built.The Acorn Mercantile was established in 1906 by Fred Bingham and E.J. Winder; the Consolidated Wagon & Machine Company was another early mercantile. These co-op stores served a useful purpose in early days as capital to operate a business could be acquired much more easily by groups than by individuals.[4]

In 1932 a J. C. Penney Company store replaced the Ashley Co-op at 4 West Main. The Penney company had originally opened in town in 1927 in the building which the Acorn store had vacated. In 1941

under the management of J.D. Jones the store was completely remodeled at a cost of $8,000. It sported new cash transmitters which connected to the upstairs office so the nine departments could have change made easily. The money and sales ticket were placed in a small container and with the pull of a string were shot up across the store to the cashier upstairs. The Penney store occupied the co-op building until 1990 when it closed its doors. The company now provides only a mail-order store in the county.

Another large store in Vernal began in about 1920 as the A-K (Ashton-Kelly) Mercantile Company, owned by Leslie Ashton, W.S. Ashton, and Benjamin P. Kelly. A company store was also opened in Jensen. Later the partnership was dissolved, with Kelly taking the Jensen store and the Ashtons the Vernal store. By 1930 the store in Vernal was called Ashton Brothers and had become a department and grocery store that was managed by Rae Ashton. Rae's sons, Stewart and Ralph, managed the store after Rae's death. It was the largest store in Vernal and brought a lot of people through the Depression on credit. Livestock men were allowed to charge goods and pay the bill in the spring when wool was sold or in the fall when cattle or sheep were shipped to market. The closing of the store in 1985 was a loss to many Vernal residents.

Wong Sing, a wealthy Chinese merchant, had an important impact on the early economy of Fort Duchesne. Wong Sing's life was a rags-to-riches story. From Canton, China, he immigrated to San Francisco and then went inland. He arrived in Fort Duchesne in 1889. Upon arrival he built a primitive laundry on the banks of the Uinta River where he scrubbed the soldiers' uniforms. Sing ordered chinaware and sold it to the wives of army officers and homesteaders. The profit from this venture enabled him to buy a restaurant on the military site, and he soon added a small store to the side of his restaurant. Complaints were made about him being on government property, so he purchased a few acres east across the river and built a store on the edge of the "Strip." At the height of his career, from 1927 to 1929, he employed eight clerks in his combination furniture store, general merchandise store, and meat market. He was greatly respected by local Indians as well as whites. Sing was killed instantly in an automobile accident in March 1934. His son, Wong Wing, took



Wong Sing's store at Fort Duchesne in the 1880s. (UCLRHC collection)

over the business after his death. In 1938 he moved the store across the Uinta River to U.S. Highway 40. Wing's wife, Jenny, joined him, and the couple also opened a store in Vernal which they operated until Wing passed away in 1952.

Other Chinese merchants opened businesses in Fort Duchesne and on South Vernal Avenue in Vernal. The area along Vernal Avenue was called China Row.[5] Chinese immigrants were brought to Rock Springs, Wyoming, to work in the Union Pacific Coal Company mines. The arrival of the Chinese coincided with mounting tensions between Asians and Euro-Americans. The newcomers were seen as strike breakers who were taking jobs away from Rock Springs residents.When the "Chinese Massacre" occurred in Rock Springs in 1885 hundreds of Chinese fled the area.[6] It is possible that some of these Chinese people drifted to Ashley Valley. Some Chinese residents of the county worked in the Gilsonite mines and began to open businesses of their own.

On Chung arrived in Vernal in 1895 and opened a restaurant, bathhouse, and laundry. He also sold Japanese and Chinese goods. An early advertisement stated he would exchange pies, cakes, and dry goods for chickens and eggs. In 1896 some malicious persons broke the windows of his restaurant and fired several shots at him. A few

months later the sign of his restaurant was torn down. In 1897 On Chung ran down the street barefoot to the sheriff's office claiming two men had come into his establishment and clubbed him over the head with a gun. Other mentions of On Chung are found in county court records.[7]

Sing Lung, another Chinese merchant, opened a business on South Vernal Avenue. He kept a pen behind the store for live chickens. One story is told of boys stealing his chickens and then selling them back to him. Often, however, actions against the Chinese were more than boyish pranks. Sing Lung spoke the Ute language fluently and left Vernal to work for the Indian agency in Ouray. He later returned to China.[8]

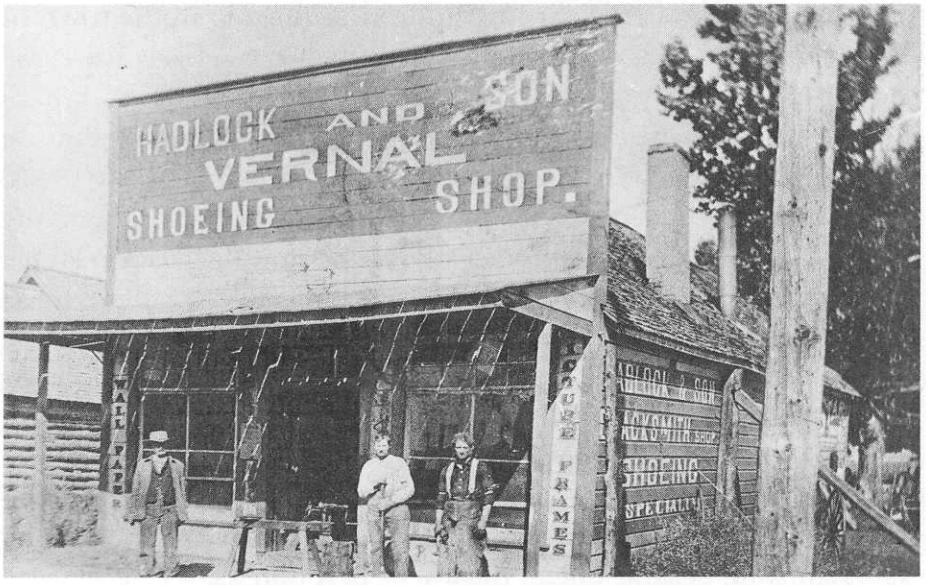
Several Chinese merchants besides Wong Sing took up businesses at Fort Duchesne. Many were victims of trouble and prejudice.[9] One document clearly states how some of the residents felt about the Chinese: when the Carbonate Mining District was organized, its constitution declared, "No Chinaman would be tolerated in the district."

While banks and mercantile stores were the largest commercial institutions in the county, other businesses also were important. Saloons made some men, like S.M. Browne, Vernal's first mayor, a well-to-do entrepreneur. The first saloons were set up in tents around the county. The first saloon in the town of Ashley went broke the same day it opened, as the owner became drunk along with his customers and forgot to charge anyone for drinks. The next saloon that opened a year later was owned by Charles Bentley, whose watered-down whiskey was so weak that it froze solid. Saloons were common in most communities, and it has been claimed that some barkeepers went to jail for selling liquor to the Indians. Many saloons were profitable; from 1 June 1916 to the end of the year, one enterprise in Vernal paid invoices in the amount of $2,345.15 for whiskey.[10] After prohibition became the law of the land, many saloons were converted into pool halls.

Another commercial institution was established on 2 January 1891 when the first newspaper was published in Uintah County. It was named *The Uintah Papoose* by the owner and publisher, Kate Jean Boan. It was printed on a printing press ordered from a mail-order house. The first issue had four pages with three columns to a page. A

year later Kate Boan sold the paper to James Barker. He did not like being teased about his papoose and changed the name to *The Vernal Express.* The newspaper changed hands several times. In 1910 a stock company was organized and took over the paper. James H. Wallis of Salt Lake City, who had come to Vernal as a sanitary inspector for the state board of health in 1917, managed the newspaper until 1923, at which time he purchased the paper. The Wallis family has continued to operate the paper, with editor James B. Wallis followed through the years by his son Jack and Jack's son Steve. The newspaper office has been located in various rented locations, including an upstairs room of the co-op building. A permanent building was constructed for the paper in 1935. The *Vernal Express* has filled an important role in serving the public and recording the history of the area.

Another important role was filled by the undertakers and morticians. The location of funeral services has moved from a private parlor to a home for funerals. There were many acting undertakers in the valley who made and decorated coffins in the early days. One was Joseph Henderson Black, who made coffins during the hard winter of 1879 and kept one on display in his carpenter shop. The first undertaker in Vernal Memorial Park Cemetery records is Solomon Pendleton Trim in 1891. Trim and Peter Dillman opened the first funeral parlor in Ashley Valley. Albert Francis Young signed sixteen of the local thirty-four death certificates in 1905, but no location of his business has been established. Peter Dillman's son Elmer graduated from Eccles School of Embalming and opened a parlor just two doors north of where Trim was practicing. Trim left the valley, and William Henderson and Ashley Bartlett started a funeral business in the building but eventually gave it up and went into the music business across the street. In 1918 Elmer Dillman died during the influenza epidemic. His wife Bessie continued her husband's undertaking business. She later married Frank Swain, and after the funeral parlor was destroyed by fire, a new parlor was moved into the Swain home, which became the Swain Funeral Home. Bessie was Ashley Valley's only undertaker until 1949 when Vernal Mortuary was started by Joseph Arben Jolley. Jolley sold the mortuary to Franklin D. Thomson in 1972, and Thomson's Vernal Mortuary continues to operate in 1996. In 1983 William K. Jolley, son of J.A. Jolley, opened



Hadlock and Sons blacksmith shop. (UCLRHC collection)

the Valley Funeral Home, which he later sold to Hullinger-Olpin Mortuary of Roosevelt. Wayne Spafford manages the present Hullinger-Jolley Funeral Home.[11]

Between 1900 and 1930 about twenty different blacksmith shops existed in Vernal alone. As horses were the main means of travel at the beginning of the county's settlement, blacksmith shops and livery stables were needed to care for the animals. Every community in the county had at least one blacksmith shop. Livery stables also were established along the roads into Uintah County. Hadlock's Blacksmith Shop and Burton's Blacksmith Shop were two of the longest-running blacksmith shops in Vernal, each operating more than thirty years.

With the advent of the automobile and tourism, service stations, cafes, and cabins were established for the convenience of travelers. One such was the Uintah Camp Cabins opened in 1929 by W.S. Henderson in Vernal. The tiny individual log cabins had no running water. A rumor started around town that Henderson was building a house of ill repute and one lady started a petition to stop the project. Henderson sold the cabins to his son Chuck and built more cabins nearby at 423 West Main.

The county's first boarding house was located in the town of Ashley in 1877; it was operated by Richard Huffaker. Hotels also came into existence early in Jensen, Ouray, and Fort Duchesne, where Sophia Curtis opened the Garrison Hotel in 1899. Boarding houses, some called hotels, were located in Vernal by at least the early 1890s. They included the Horse Shoe Hotel owned by M.A.Workman; the Vernal House, with Mrs. Simons as the proprietor; the Bascom Hotel; the Uintah House, owned by J. B. Blankenship; and the Valley House operated by Mrs. M. W. King. They offered rooms by the day or week, and meals were served. In 1896 an article in the *Vernal Express* expressed the need for a real hotel. In 1898 Mrs. R. M. Carey started a "first class" hotel she named the Cottage Hotel in the building formerly occupied by Wong On. Arthur Rich later purchased the hotel, which was located on North Vernal Avenue near the Uintah Railroad stage stop and became one of the town's best hotels.

Early hotels were located on South Vernal Avenue, because it was the main road into town. Main Street was at first called Uintah Avenue; but when the roads into town changed to come from the east and west, hotels expanded onto that street and the name was changed to Main Street. The Noe Hotel was the first to be built on West Main; it opened in 1901. Owners changed through the years, and the hotel's name changed to the Elks Hotel, Oxford Hotel, and at last to the Gipson Hotel at 121 West Main. One of the main hotels was the Vernal Hotel on 100 South Vernal Avenue. This hotel was operated by sisters May Long Jorgensen, Sarah Rudge, and others. It burned down in 1936. Later Mrs. Jorgensen purchased the Calder Building and opened the Commercial Hotel at 54 West Main. Increased tourism and automobile travel has changed the nature of transient lodging in Vernal as in other cities. Contemporary travelers prefer the convenience of motels, which have replaced hotels to the point that there are only two hotels remaining in Vernal.

Large restaurants and small cafes of all kinds were opened in the county, including the Bon Ton Restaurant and the Greasy Spoon. Jim's Cafe in Vernal was the first to stay open all night. Vernal's first fast food drive-ins were a hot dog stand known as the Pig Stand and Lynn Pack's root beer stand, both of which opened in 1932. The Pig

Stand was owned by Warren Belcher and grew to become the 7–11 Ranch Cafe. Other drive-ins have followed in subsequent decades.

Barber shops opened early in the settlement; one featured baths for men. In 1927 beauty shops began to open. Specialty dress, millinery, gift, jewelry, and other shops also were established. Many of these small shops and stores began to close in the 1970s with the arrival of large grocery stores and all-purpose stores like K-Mart and Wal-Mart.

One of the area's first manufacturing businesses was Newton Brothers' Saddle Company, which was established in 1905 as a shoe store and grew to make harnesses, saddle trees, and fine saddles. The company also provided catalog sales outside the area, as did Standard Saddle Tree, which started operating in 1951. Bessie Swain, Vernal's lady mortician, manufactured laundry soap in 1922. In 1969 Vernal Sportswear, a subsidiary of Dale Sportswear of California, a clothing manufacturing firm, operated for a short time with twenty industrial sewing machines. Because of the need for oil-related supply businesses, an industrial area developed between Vernal and Naples beginning in the 1970s.

Other early industrial endeavors in the area included sawmills. In the Uinta Mountains north of Vernal and extending west for a hundred miles is the largest body of timber in Utah. It has been estimated that 700 million board feet of timber are in the Uintah County portion of the Ashley National Forest. In 1917 all the mills in the Uinta Basin using timber from the Ashley Forest produced 2.6 million board feet of lumber. In 1935 this figure had increased to 10 million board feet, produced by thirty-five mills. In 1967 the Vernal District alone provided 7 million board feet from four mills.[12] Early settlers cut and hauled logs off the mountains to build their cabins. This changed after the national forest was established. Men could be arrested and charged with willful trespass when taking logs from the forest without a permit. These timber restrictions along with the grazing restrictions were hard for many early settlers to accept; in fact, many inhabitants of the area still resent them.

The first sawmill was started in 1878 by Peter Dillman and John Steinaker using a whipsaw. The saw was set up in Ashley near the first school site and the lumber was sawed for the school. The saw was

then moved to Taylor Mountain to cut lumber for Pardon Dodds. The men built Dodds's cabin on the mountain where they camped, sawing up to 150 feet of lumber a day.[13] Alma Johnstun brought his sawmill from Park City on 27 October 1880. It was a difficult task to bring the heavy machinery over the rough roads; Pimmy Rynmon helped Johnstun bring in the equipment. The mill was taken to Dry Fork Mountain and for many years supplied lumber for builders in the valley. The mill was set up at different locations in the mountains. Probably the most noted setting was at Kane Hollow on Brush Creek Mountain. Johnstun also built the Red Planer Mill at 500 West Main in Vernal in 1882; it was destroyed by fire in May 1892. Alma's son Darrell operated a mill on Taylor Mountain at Soldiers Park for many years before selling it to Bjorn Rye.

The soldiers stationed at Fort Thornburgh at the mouth of Dry Fork Canyon built a sawmill in 1882 at Government Park on Taylor Mountain. William H. Siddoway, an early pioneer of the valley and prominent businessman, started a sawmill around 1884 about two miles from the government mill site on Taylor Mountain near what is now Oaks Park Reservoir.[14]

Patrick Henry Carroll erected an improvised sawmill and sawed crude lumber at a mill site at Rock Point. This mill supplied lumber to area settlers. Carroll filed on 160 acres of meadowland at the mouth of Dry Fork Canyon, but when Fort Thornburgh was moved to Maeser, the government chose this meadow for the fort location and Carroll had to relinquish his claim. He was paid for improvements and had the filing fee returned. He later moved the mill to Taylor Mountain. A small sign at the side of the road on Taylor Mountain reads, "Pat Carroll's mill site." In 1893 when Carroll died, his son Ed moved the mill down to the valley.

John Slaugh and his son Dick operated a mill at various locations near Windy and Oaks parks on Taylor Mountain and also near Dyer Park on Brush Creek Mountain. Dan Allen operated the sawmill for the building of the old flume in Dry Fork Canyon, after which his son Arch operated the mill, as did Arch's sons Merle and Keith. Charles Hardy spent several years timbering and sawing lumber. He worked around Oaks Park, and during the winter used bobsleds to haul the timber to the face of Taylor Mountain. When spring broke, the tim-



Henry Ruple's oxen team hauling lumber from mountains. (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne collection)

ber was hauled down to the sawmill. Years later his son Elmo went into the sawmill business, working around Farm Creek and Whiterocks.

The Cook family had an early sawmill and planer mill for many years located in Vernal north of the Tabernacle. The Cooks were noted for their workmanship during the early years of the century. William Cook operated the Flume Sawmill in Dry Fork in 1910, selling it to James O. Nord in 1919. Nord sold the sawmill to Charles T. Pope. Dan E. Adams acquired the mill and ran it on Taylor Mountain until it was destroyed by fire in 1924.

Henry Ruple sawed lumber for the government during the building of Fort Thornburgh. Early settings for this mill were near Government Park on Taylor Mountain and other sites between there and Pot Creek on Diamond Mountain. The mill was operated by steam power and the logs were hauled by wagon with a team of oxen. George Dagle purchased the Ruple sawmill on Brush Creek Mountain and opened the Central Lumber Yard in Vernal.

Fred Feltch came to Vernal from Fraizer, Colorado, in 1914 and bought a farm in Ashley Ward. He became interested in the logging business and began a sawmill on his farm. He was the first to run a mill with electricity and the first to buy a large truck to haul logs off

the mountain. He also installed a dipping vat for treating power poles. He cut poles on Red Mountain and skidded them down the east slope by team, then hauled them off the mountain in a big Marlin truck. Silver Licht worked Fred Feltch's sawmill in Ashley and then moved to Manila where he went into business for himself. He and his son Lynn later logged out of Pat Carroll Park.

Ernest Caldwell and Eric Nelson began a sawmill in 1943, operating out of East Park and Big Park in the Ashley Forest and employing a crew of eleven men. The next winter Caldwell bought Nelson out and continued to operate the mill on Taylor Mountain at Big Park. He later moved the mill to Vernal, where he and his son Bryce operated the mill, hauling logs off the mountain.

James M. Griffin and David H. Bingham owned a sawmill known as the Vernal Sawmill near East Park. It was located on a creek and a flume was built to float the logs through the rough area. In 1899 T.T. Holdaway purchased Bingham's interest in the mill, which had been moved onto Little Brush Creek. In 1906 a new company was formed for this mill; it included J.M. Griffin, E.W. Davis, Herman Miller, and Leslie Ashton.

The Park Lumber Company mill at Twin Parks on Taylor Mountain was operated by Joe Luck and his sons, who produced large quantities of shingles. Other men who operated mills in the county were Henry Bill Gardner, Harvey Kanistanaux, and Scotty Massey in Dry Fork Canyon. Swen Anderson operated a mill in 1896, and William Anderson and a Mr. Jolly operated another around 1906. Brothers named Lybbert owned a mill on the west side of the county and Charles Hutcheon owned one in Whiterocks. Douglas Mountain Sawmill furnished lumber for a lumberyard at Jensen managed by C.H. Hellman. Eliza Walters Anderson operated a sawmill near Dyer. Other mills included the Reynolds Sawmill, McKune Sawmill, and Hicks Sawmill, and there may have been others. Martin Oaks came to the valley in 1879 and built the first shingle mill, located on Taylor Mountain near Oaks Park.

Several sawmills were set up on the mountain north of LaPoint and Tridell where the settlers could take logs to be sawed into lumber. The first was established by John Bowles on Mosby Park near Bowl Spring and built as early as 1907 or 1908. When Adolphus Le

Beau was manager of the mill, the steam boiler blew up; fortunately, no one was hurt. Bowles sold the mill to A.J. Johnston. In 1912 Johnston set up another mill farther back in Mill Canyon. Bill Johnston was the third miller on this mountain, with a sawmill located at Paradise Creek below Paradise Park. Next, a Mr. Hardinger put a mill in at Deer or Buck Point. Henry Lee and his brother Eli owned a mill for two years and then sold it in 1927 to George H. Bartlett and Neldon Nyberg, who were still operating the mill in 1931 according to the *Vernal Express.* The mill was later moved to Mosby Park. The mill was powered by a Case steam tractor. Water for the steam engine came from a nearby lake. The logs were brought to the mill by horses; sometimes the wagon was used to load one end of the logs, the other ends of which dragged along the ground. In wintertime bobsleds were used. Lumber was hauled down the mountain to market on wagons or sleighs in winter to Tridell, LaPoint, Vernal, Roosevelt, and other nearby towns.

The A.J. Johnston mill on Brush Creek Mountain burned to the ground in 1916. This was the second fire to plague this company. In 1928 a bigger steam engine and boiler were purchased from an abandoned gold dredge on the Green River above Jensen. It was moved to the mountain mostly by draft-team wagons and sleighs. A truck was hired to haul the big boiler to the foot of the mountain. During the fall and winter of 1929, the equipment was set up in Paradise Park. A large shed was built, and two planers and the saw were run by the steam engine. In the summer of 1930 the company purchased its first small truck to haul lumber to market.

George and Owen Bartlett took their families to the mountains each spring when school was out and stayed all summer until school started in the fall. Their company operated in Paradise Park for ten years, until 1940 when the sawmill burned to the ground. Nothing was saved. George and Owen purchased a mill and a diesel engine and set up operations on the hill west of the George Bartlett home. Logs were hauled by truck from Mosby Mountain. Owen, his son Mark, and George's son Lester operated the mill in Tridell until 1951. In 1957 the mill was sold and moved.[15] In 1920 Hen Lee and A. Warburton purchased a planing mill in Roosevelt and moved it to LaPoint.

The first government sawmill was operated by George Dickson a short distance north of Whiterocks. Sappanis Cutch and Pete Dillman also worked in the mill. Three other government mills operated at times—one in Dry Gulch, one in Uinta Canyon, and one in John Star Flat. Twenty-four sawmills were on or near the Ashley National Forest in 1943, and eighteen of these operated throughout the summer. Many mine props were taken from the forest that year. Byron Thomas and sons Bill and Bud ran a sawmill in Meadow Park and later moved the mill to their ranch in Dry Fork. They hauled logs by truck from Dry Fork Mountain to the mill.

A million-dollar lumber industry was envisioned for Ashley Valley with the acquisition of the controlling interest in the Flaming Gorge Stud Sawmill by the Croft brothers. In 1968 Leo Croft purchased the mill which Smoky Rasmussen had begun to develop. Another nearby small mill was purchased from Ward Blazzard. The mill was located near Doc's Beach on the Taylor Mountain road. The mill was sold to a company from New Mexico which operated it for about two years and then turned it back to Croft. This caused difficulty for Croft and his company went into bankruptcy and was taken over by the bank.[16] The Simper family purchased the mill from the bank. It later burned but was rebuilt.

Alfred Simper ran a mill in the Greendale area in the early years. Alfred's son Jay carried on the business. Jay also had a mill in Vernal which was moved to Mail Draw east of Steinaker Draw; Gary Simper operated it. The Mail Draw Mill burned out several times and Simper purchased the Croft Mill near Doc's Beach, which also burned. At present the Mail Draw Mill has been abandoned, and only the mill at Doc's Beach is in operation. Simper Lumber Company went into the fourth generation in the 1990s when Wayne Simper purchased the mill from other family members.

The Sweeney family started a lumber business in LaPoint in 1913. William Sweeney took over the business in 1929, which is now known as the Great Lakes Timber Company. Some mills operated for only a season; others continued for several years with many men employed cutting logs, working in the sawmills, and hauling the logs down from the mountains. The mills have been a great source of rev-

enue for the county's economy and much of the lumber is found in area homes and businesses today.

Brickmaking was another large industry in the county. One of the first brickmaking kilns, owned by Charles B. Atwood, began operation in 1889 and produced brick for the Central School and Ashley Co-op. Swain brothers' brickyard made the brick for the Uintah LDS Tabernacle in 1901, and one of the last brickmakers, Al Campbell, made brick for the Vernal LDS First Ward in 1928. Other companies involved in brickmaking (and their founding dates) include Brunker & Davids, 1897; Teeters & Brunker, 1898; S.W. Tucker & H.H. Taylor, 1892; Berkley Brick Company, 1901; John Grant, 1907; Johnson, Bullock & Company, 1898; George Johnstun and Ed Taylor, 1898; Mark Cook, 1916; and George Fuller, 1925. A plant for making pressed brick opened at Avalon in 1940, producing brick in various colors, and Abner Swain operated a brickyard in LaPoint. Fred Wahlquist and Blake Peay purchased a brick press and began business in Randlett during the Depression, operating it for two summers before they gave up on the enterprise.

Early lime-kiln operators included D.H. Workman, who constructed the first lime kiln in Maeser to burn lime for plaster; Duke Brothers made lime in 1901. W.P. Reynolds made the county's first plaster of paris, which was ground in the old burr mill and used as the hard finish on the original co-op building. William Oaks was one of the first men in the area to burn gypsum.

Another enterprise that has been a factor in the county's growth economy is fish hatcheries. Between 1902 and 1922 several organizations including the Vernal Gun and Rifle Club, Commercial Club, and U.S. Forest Service worked to get a fish hatchery for the area. Construction of the Whiterocks hatchery by the Utah Fish and Game Department began in August 1922 at a location northwest of Whiterocks just below Provo Ditch spring. The constant 50 degree water temperature from the spring was favorable for raising cutthroat, eastern brook, and brown trout. From some 600,000 fish eggs furnished to the hatchery, a good supply of trout grew, and the first fish from the hatchery were released in county streams in 1929. Most of the fish were planted from eight-gallon cans carried on horseback to the streams and lakes of the Uinta Mountains. Fish planting

became much easier in 1931 when the hatchery acquired its first fish-planting truck.

The Whiterocks hatchery was enlarged several times, including 1935 when Federal Emergency Relief Administration funds were secured and 1956 when new cement ponds were built. The expanded hatchery, now one of the largest in the state, provides as many as 3 million fish annually for the Uinta Basin and other locations throughout the state. Airplanes now transport the one-to-three-inch-long fish to the lakes, dropping them almost 100 feet into the water.

A second local fish hatchery was constructed by the Bureau of Reclamation in May 1965 to mitigate the loss of fish habitat and the increase in fishing recreational use due to the Colorado River Storage Project. The Jones Hole National Fish Hatchery was put into production in January 1970. Jones Hole is accessed by traveling over Diamond Mountain forty-two miles northeast of Vernal near the Colorado border. Constant water temperature from the seven springs which supply water to the hatchery makes the Jones Hole Fish Hatchery ideal year round for producing rainbow, brown, and cutthroat trout. Operated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Jones Hole Fish Hatchery supplies half of its fish to Flaming Gorge Reservoir as well as supplying fish to Steinaker, Red Fleet, and Strawberry reservoirs.

The development of commercial and industrial enterprises from the first trading post and co-op to the large national chain stores has been a continual endeavor. The county's main settlement of Vernal no longer has a close small-town atmosphere but has become a bustling city meeting the needs of a growing and diverse population.

ENDNOTES

1. *Vernal Express*, 21 December 1967.

2. "A Brief History of Uintah State Bank," unpublished manuscript presented by Henry Schaffermeyer to Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

3. Annual Report to the Stockholders of Uintah State Bank, 1941; copy located in Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 0311.

4. Mildred Lind Mansfield, "Ashley Co-op and Other Co-op Stores of

Early Days," unpublished manuscript, copy held in Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

5. Margaret Francke, untranscribed interview with author at Uintah County Library in 1985.

6. The "Chinese Massacre" began when a group of angry Rock Springs miners attacked the local Chinatown, killing more than forty people, burning at least eighty cabins, and driving up to 500 people from the town. See Craig Storti, *Incident at Bitter Creek, The Story of the Rock Springs Chinese Massacre* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1991), 113–20; and Robert B. Rhode, *Booms & Busts on Bitter Creek* (Boulder, CO: Pruett Publishing Company, 1987), 45–63.

7. *Vernal Express*, 22 April 1897 and 28 April 1898.

8. Ibid., 14 September 1893, 23 January 1896, and 8 July 1897; Harold Workman, interview with author at Regional History Center, Uintah County Library, 12 July 1993.

9. See, for example, *Vernal Express*, 6 March 1891, 17 July 1891, 29 December 1892, and 22 June 1893.

10. Ibid., 16 February 1917.

11. Ibid., 22 and 29 July 1987.

12. Byron Loosle, "The Ashley National Forest," unpublished manuscript, copy located in Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

13. *Life and Times of Peter Dillman* (Springville, UT: Art City Publishing Co., 1954), 19; "History of Teancum Taylor," unpublished manuscript, copy located in Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

14. Vera Christena Lee Bigelow and Vera Helen Bigelow Chivers, *The Ancestors and Descendants of Isaac Lee and Elizabeth Blizard* (Salt Lake City: Lee Family, 1987), 67.

15. Lester H. Bartlett, "History of Bartlett Lumber Company," unpublished paper, copy located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

16. Leo Croft, telephone interview with Doris Burton, 10 August 1994.

7

Hard Times, War Times, and Good Times

Twentieth Century Events

Uintah County was drawn into world events when the United States entered World War I on 2 April 1917. Three hundred eighteen young men from Uintah County served in this war, with fifteen giving their lives. County residents made many sacrifices for the war, including rationing and cutbacks, but also benefited from the conflict as the war period brought boom times to American industry and to Uintah County. The war ended on 11 November 1918.

The worldwide influenza epidemic that occurred shortly after the war also had an impact on Uintah County, as will be discussed elsewhere in this book. Especially troubled economic times began in October 1929 when stock values plunged dramatically and the Great Depression began. As the troubles deepened, banks, factories, and stores closed across the country, leaving millions of Americans penniless and jobless.

At the beginning of the Depression, Vernal seemed to prosper. After forty-two years of service to residents of Uintah County, the Ashley Co-operative underwent a complete remodeling, with a store addition as well as new equipment. The sheep industry brought in

more than one million dollars in the sale of wool and lambs in 1930, and nearly a quarter-million fish were planted in streams of the Uintas. However, Uintah County was affected as time went on, and Utah became one of the states hardest hit by the Depression. President Herbert Hoover tried to stop the Depression and planned public works programs to alleviate unemployment; however, most Americans felt he was not doing enough to bolster the economy. His plans were never realized as voters insisted on a change and elected Franklin D. Roosevelt to the presidency by a landslide in 1932. Uintah County voted Democratic for the first time in years, supporting Roosevelt with 1,791 votes as compared with Hoover's 1,356. In 1936 Uintah County again supported President Roosevelt with 1,595 votes to Alf Landon's 1,088. In 1940 the vote was closer in Uintah County, but Roosevelt won with 1,761 votes to Wendell Wilkie's 1,615. Since 1940 Uintah County has remained predominantly Republican.

President Roosevelt was convinced it was the government's obligation to help end the Depression, and he called upon Congress to enact laws to reach this goal. The program which evolved from these efforts was called the New Deal. The New Deal legislation had three main purposes: (1) to provide relief for the needy, (2) to create jobs and encourage business expansion, and (3) to reform business and government practices to prevent further depression.

The year 1932 was a trying one for the nation, including residents of Uintah County, who were beginning to feel the effects of the Depression. The county also experienced a hard winter in 1932–33 and livestock were suffering. Jensen had the coldest night in history in February 1933 when the weather plummeted to 44 degrees below zero. The cattle near the Green River were fed cottonwood trees and with a little grain wintered nicely. Some cattlemen in the valley had hay and straw for their stock. Watering the cattle through the ice was a problem as there was a danger of animals falling through. A serious mistake had been made by sheepmen in previous years when young stock were sold in an attempt to clear debts. Young sheep could have withstood the cold winter better than weaker old sheep. Many sheep had been moved into the county from other areas and the available winter range was overcrowded.

This hard winter was followed by a drought. Crops were parched

in Ashley Valley in 1934 and the Green River flow dropped to its lowest mark in thirty-one years. Over $12,000 was given by the state drought committee for an emergency crop project on Green River Bottoms. In 1934 Uintah County was designated as an emergency drought county and was eligible to sell cattle under provisions of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, which helped regulate farm production.[1] All cattle purchased under this plan were destroyed on the ranch if condemned or shipped to market and canned for use by needy individuals. During the month of July more than 50,000 quarts of meat were canned in various communities in Uintah County. By September, 7,637 head of cattle had been purchased—3,812 of these were condemned and the rest were hauled by truck to the stockyards at Salt Lake and Ogden. More than 20,000 cattle were purchased the following years and thousands of dollars were received by the cattle owners. By the time the buying program was completed, about one-fourth of the cattle of the county either had been condemned or shipped out. By the fall of 1934 the government had begun purchasing sheep under the same program. Although it devastated the stockmen to see their livestock killed, it also relieved them since there was not feed for the animals. Stockmen were allowed to use what they could to eat, and feeding the family was the highest priority. Some beef was placed in a salt brine and cured like ham.

The Depression affected Vernal citizens in many different ways. Those with money found that the resulting low prices put them in a better financial position than they had been in the 1920s. On the other hand, many ranchers and land owners who had loans at the Bank of Vernal lost their livelihood as the bank foreclosed on their loans. Many families lost their homes to foreclosure; others lost them when they could not afford to pay the taxes. The people who had money made money by buying property for low prices at tax sales. Most families were living from hand-to-mouth. One family sold a cow for thirty-two dollars in the fall; that money was all the cash available for them to live on until the next summer. Farm families who had a milk cow, chickens, and a garden generally had enough food to eat, except in 1934 when the drought took their gardens. The problem was finding enough cash to pay the rent, land payments,

taxes, and purchase clothing and necessities. Churches helped provide for people who were near starvation.

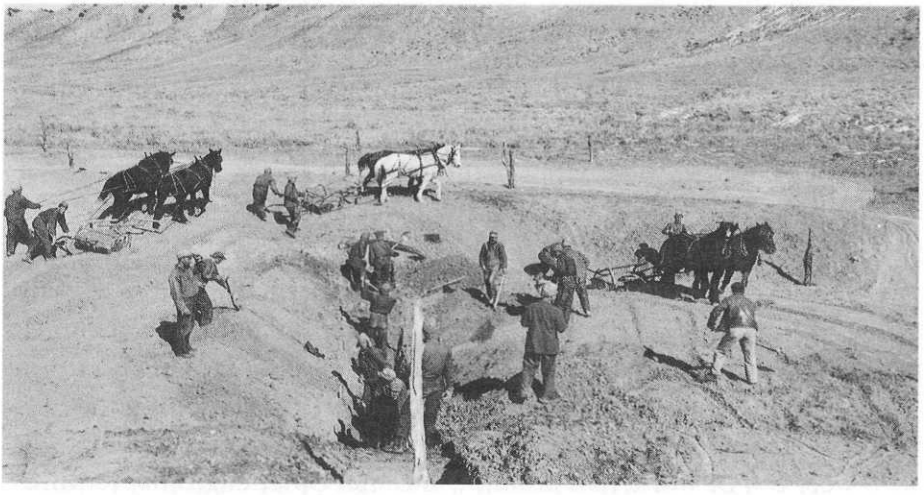
The radio provided the only entertainment for many families. "Begin the Beguine" was a popular song of the day and comedians such as Jack Benny took people's thoughts off the Depression by giving them a good laugh. Eddie Cantor was another radio favorite—that is, for those who had a radio.

Several New Deal programs operated in Uintah County to help accomplish the goals of relief, recovery, and reform. Perhaps the most popular was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). This program was intended to stimulate economic recovery by providing jobs for unemployed young men from eighteen to twenty-five years of age who were out of work, had families, and met other eligibility requirements. The age limits were later changed to seventeen and twenty-three. Enlistment periods were for six months. The young men were paid $45 a month, of which most was sent home to their parents.

The Interior and Agriculture departments supervised the men on projects which were on public lands. Many enrollees were city boys who had never had the opportunity to work in natural settings and who benefited enormously from this program. The program not only benefited their poverty-stricken families back home but also gave some of these young men a new outlook at life.

The CCC program started in 1933. At its peak, 1,500 camps were established across the country, with 300,000 young men working in them. Several camps were located in the Uinta Basin. In 1935 Uintah County bought ground from William H. and Emily Siddoway to build a CCC camp and then leased the land to the government. Barracks were built south of the present National Guard Armory under the direction of Bus Hatch. Some of these green-roofed barracks are still in use by the Forest Service. The camp in Vernal was designated DG-31, Camp 1507, under the Department of Interior, Division of Grazing. Mayor Rice C. Cooper stated that Vernal benefitted by $60,000 annually from DG-31.[2]

Iron Springs in the Uinta Mountains was chosen for the site of a forest CCC camp. Two hundred unemployed men went to work there. The CCC camp at Bullionville made many improvements on the forest road on Brush Creek Mountain. Some 1,000 men from



Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) crew building a reservoir in Little Valley (UCLRHC, Vernal Express collection)

Utah enrolled in the CCC program, including forty-one from Uintah County, forty from Duchesne County, and ten from Daggett County. In Vernal Camp 1507, enrollees numbered 208, including ninety-eight from Ohio, five from Indiana, ninety-five from Kentucky, and ten local boys. Many spike camps where CCC boys camped out on various projects were also located in the area. Walter Busch, a local man, was assigned to take mail to the spike camps and see that the camps were supplied with food and water.[3] Other camps were located in Ouray and in Uinta Canyon.

The following projects were completed by the Vernal camp crews: seven cattle corrals with three or four pens each, and twenty-one sheep corrals with ten pens were constructed; sixteen springs developed; forty-one reservoirs constructed; 150 miles of road built; twenty bridges built; 100,000 acres treated for rodent and cricket control; thousands of hours of snow removal, sometimes twenty-four hours a day at sub-zero weather clearing roads to ranches, schools, and cemeteries; many drift fences made and miles of cedar post fences built; and many searches for lost and drowned people. The youths worked on the road to Manila along with numerous other roads and trails, providing motorized access to places not before accessible.[4]

Some of the corpsmen married local girls and have spent the rest of their lives in Vernal or other parts of Utah. Many have written how the program influenced their lives for the better, and many have made outstanding achievements in various fields. In recent years some have returned to visit. When World War II began, the Civilian Conservation Corps ended. War work and the draft called many of these men to various places in the world.

Another New Deal organization, the Works Progress Administration (WPA), created in 1935, provided construction jobs on public projects such as highways and parks. The WPA helped many people in Uintah County who needed assistance by giving them from forty to eighty dollars per month, depending on how many people were in the family. Recipients earned this assistance by working on civic or government projects such as fighting weeds at forty to fifty cents per hour.

State projects included a WPA and Civilian Works Administration (CWA) project at Dinosaur National Monument. A crew of twenty-five men worked at the dinosaur quarry to finish preliminary excavation. WPA and Economic Recovery Administration (ERA) funds were obtained to finance the Buck Pasture and Long Park reservoirs. Workers helped at the Vernal asphalt plant, the Jensen wildfowl nesting and hunting grounds, Whiterocks fish hatchery, and two statewide sanitary projects.

The CWA employed thousands of people in building highways and roads as well as hospitals and schools. In November 1933, 221 unemployed Uintah County workers were put to work by the CWA. Street work in Vernal was included as well as projects in other parts of the county.

The Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) was founded in 1933 and funded state welfare programs. In December 1935, 2,658 people were on the relief rolls of Utah. That same month $13,000 was paid out through FERA programs in Uintah County. One program employed teachers; also, surplus goods were distributed and lunches furnished to schoolchildren. The Utah Emergency Relief Administration (UERA) worked on a county level and sponsored planting trees and shrubs in parks.

Other relief for Uintah County came from the Agricultural

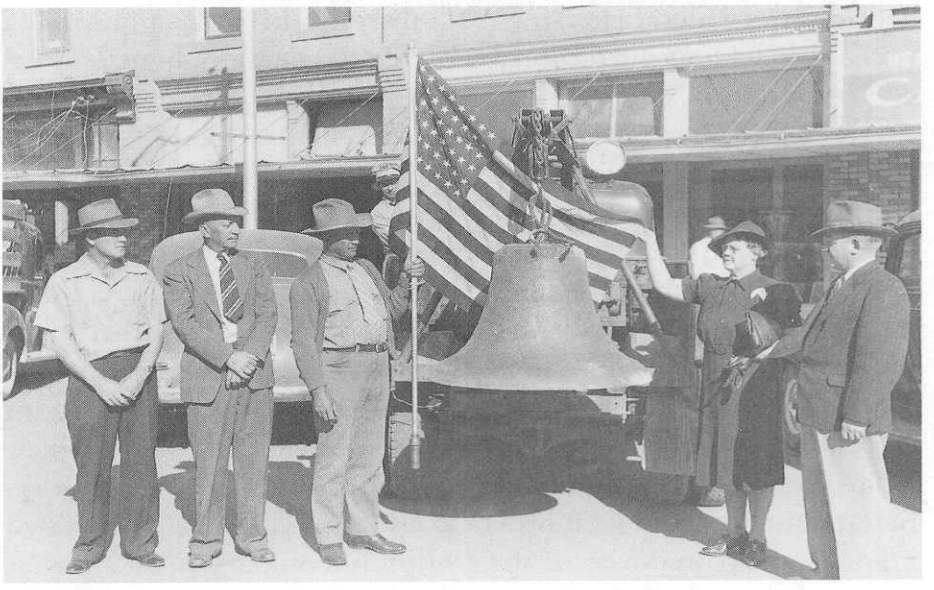
Adjustment Administration (AAA), which helped regulate farm production, and from the Public Works Administration (PWA), which provided jobs in constructing bridges, dams, and schools. The federal works programs spent nearly one million dollars for public improvements in Uintah County.

A large payroll came to Vernal with the 1939 establishment of the Utah National Guard unit, Company B of the 115th Regiment of Engineers. The enlisted men stayed in barracks at the CCC camp and ate at the community house. Seventy-four men received training in basic military maneuvers on the fairgrounds and were given instructions in the use of rifles and explosives on the rifle range at Steinaker Draw.[5]

By 1939 the Great Depression was ending, though the nation's unemployment rate was still 15 percent in 1940 and most New Deal programs continued to operate until 1941. In 1939 Vernal had responded to the lessening of the Depression with the construction of twenty-two new businesses and homes worth $150,000.

War, although in many ways devastating, seems to bring a surge to the economy, and the real end of the Depression came as America moved closer to war. On 7 December 1941, Japanese forces launched a surprise attack on the U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, bringing the United States into World War II. The nation's industry tooled up for full-scale war production. A number of Ashley Valley and Uinta Basin men were stationed in Hawaii or aboard ships taking part in the struggle in the Pacific; others served in the European theater of the war.

Concerns for economic growth were put on hold as residents rallied to support the war effort, even donating the 1896 curfew bell to the scrap-metal drive. The abandoned Uintah Railroad steel rails were ripped up and remolded for war uses. War stamp and bond drives were held in communities and schools. Local schoolchildren collected tin foil, scrap paper, tin cans, and 3,400 bags of milkweed pods, which were used as a substitute for kapok and were enough to make 1,100 life-jackets. Homes, hearts, and pocketbooks were opened to servicemen passing through the area. A doctor shortage occurred as medical practitioners were drafted into the service. Draft evaders made the news, as did rationing of food, gasoline, tires, automobiles,



Vernal's historic curfew bell donated for the World War II scrap metal drive. From left to right: Frances Feltch, Briant Stringham, Russell Montgomery, LaVern Adams and Harold Lundell. (UCLRHC collection)

shoes, and other items. At least ten soldiers from Uintah County were taken as prisoners of war and ninety-three Uinta Basin soldiers were on the casualty list.

The year 1945 signalled the end of one era and the beginning of a new one. V-E Day, for victory in Europe, came on 8 May with Nazi Germany's unconditional surrender ending the European phase of World War II. Japanese forces on Okinawa surrendered on 21 June after two and a half months of deadly struggle. In early August the United States exploded two atomic bombs over Japanese soil, and on 15 August, V-J Day, for victory over Japan, marked the end of World War II.

Post–World War II Developments

Uintah County residents had felt insecure when President Roosevelt died in 1945. However, with the end of war, they found confidence in new president Harry S.Truman, and progress came to Uintah County. The war had stimulated the oil industry and brought boom years to the county. In 1946 Vernal had an acute housing short-

age, and the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) sponsored a million-dollar housing project to provide 100 new area homes. Motel accommodations were insufficient for the new arrivals, many of whom had to be lodged in private homes. In 1947 there was a need for 200 homes. The FHA called for immediate construction of up to 100 new homes in the Uinta Basin for veterans. Because of the housing shortage, 110 trailers were moved into the Vernal trailer parks. The population complained of constantly rising prices of food, clothing, rent, and other necessities of life. However, at least the things needed were available for purchase, as rationing was over.

Uncertainty again gripped the nation as North Korean troops crossed the 38th parallel and invaded South Korea in 1950. The new United Nations, in an attempt to handle the situation, sent an international police force with orders to end the hostilities. The United States sent the majority of the troops and embarked on a costly, unpopular war. In July 1953 the North Koreans and their Chinese allies agreed to a cease-fire and the Korean War came to an end. Four Uintah County boys lost their lives in this war. Up to this point, Americans had always experienced a declared victory in military conflict, so this ambiguous end came as a bitter shock to many American people.

War again hit the home front of Uintah County in the 1960s when U.S. troops landed in Vietnam. Hundreds of thousands of American youths fought in the increasingly unpopular war, and society at home was bitterly divided over the conflict. Finally, on 27 January 1973, U.S. troops were completely withdrawn from Vietnam. Washington officials had considered the war essential to prevent the spread of Communism. The effort resulted in what many considered to be a horrific military, diplomatic, political, social, and moral defeat, with 57,000 American lives lost, including twelve Uintah County men. The Vietnam conflict reached its official conclusion in 1975 with victory by the North Vietnamese forces.

In August 1990 a new international crisis over oil in the Persian Gulf threatened to involve United States troops and had a direct impact on the economy of Uintah County. It was predicted that sharp increases in the price of crude oil brought on by a boycott of oil from Iraq would mean a boom for the Uinta Basin; but this did

not transpire. The morning of 16 January 1991, U.S. Air Force bombers moved across Iraq and the Persian Gulf War began. Uintah County men and women fought in the Persian crisis, but the county was fortunate not to lose any young people. The war lasted only a few weeks.

As each war ended and U.S. active involvement abated, attention centered on making a life and a livelihood in the county. Vernal doubled its population from 2,500 to 5,000 persons in the three years from 1947 to 1950, mostly due to oil activity. The boom continued through the 1950s and 1960s, with a 12.5 percent increase in population registered between 1950 and 1960.

The introduction of television brought the world even closer to Uintah County. Residents were given more choices in 1956 when "subscription" TV was brought to Vernal by Basin Television Company, with Chuck (C.R.) Henderson as manager. Basin TV placed equipment on Asphalt Ridge. In 1958 Uintah County installed equipment on Blue Mountain to bring residents community television. Jobs were created by the new industry.

Agriculture and government provided nearly half of the jobs in the Uinta Basin by the 1960s. In 1961, out of a total of 6,360 jobs, agriculture provided employment for 2,030 and government for 1,090.[6]

The boom years continued into the 1970s, with a record of nearly $5 million in building permits issued in Uintah County during 1972. A total of 339 building permits were issued for an estimated total of $4.9 million in construction work.[7]

In 1970 Shell Oil Company had 100 people working in the area, with a payroll of around a million dollars. In 1973 that increased to 500 persons, with a payroll of $4.5 million. Stauffer Chemical Company's expansion of its phosphate rock-mining operations increased production at its Vernal plant by about 40 percent.[8] Between 1970 and 1974 Uintah County's population increased by 27 percent due to oil and mining industry expansion.

In 1974 oil-shale development was affecting economic activities as Uinta Basin Association of Governments (UBAG) Energy Council tackled oil-shale impact planning. It became evident that decisions made on how to proceed toward new community development

would have a marked effect on the future of the community. After the Department of Interior determined it was in the national interest, the decisions were made to lease oil-shale land and try to create an oil-shale industry in the Uinta Basin.

Even though the county seemed to be booming, income comparisons made during 1975 indicated that not all residents were sharing in the bounty. Uintah County personal income averaged $3,818 per capita, compared with $4,938 for the state as a whole and $5,903 for the nation.[9]

The economy continued to expand in Uintah County. In 1981 county construction hit $1.1 billion; Painted Hills Estate Housing Project northwest of Maeser started construction on a planned 930 units; Ashton Energy Center, a multi-million dollar project, began construction. Some building was going on in Jensen to alleviate the housing shortage in that area.[10] Two local tar-sands projects were under construction. Standard Oil bought American Gilsonite stock, Stauffer Chemical sold their plant to Chevron, and Deseret Generation and Transmission began construction on a $1.2–million Bonanza power plant. The impact was felt on the community in various ways, including the fact that all of the area schools were full. Naples residents felt that the industrial area had grown enough to warrant a city and voted to incorporate Naples in 1982, electing Lawrence Kay as the city's first mayor.

The boom, which had been expected to continue to the year 2000, began to diminish in the early 1980s as oil production was cut back, and the future of oil-shale development dimmed as Utah projects were omitted from a $2.7-billion syn-fuel funding package. The county's economy became sluggish and unemployment reached a high level.

Despite the rising unemployment, some optimism bloomed as the Uintah County Care Center (nursing home) opened in 1983. The following year Chevron announced plans to expand its Brush Creek phosphate facilities and construct a $250-million fertilizer plant. The *Vernal Express* began publishing its newspaper twice a week in 1984, with Wednesday and Friday editions. Housing in the Vernal area began to tighten up as rental apartments became scarce in 1984, but

because of the overbuilding two years previously many single family dwellings were still vacant.

With a slump in oil-shale projects, residents began moving out of the Uinta Basin; but forecasters were still projecting steady economic growth. The community impact board allocated $1.19 million to communities in 1984 to pay for projects needed because of the impact caused by energy development. Included was $700,000 to Vernal City.[11]

Nearly ten years of planning and work were rewarded as the Bonanza Power Plant was completed by the Deseret Generation and Transmission Cooperative. It was dedicated 20 September 1985, and the start-up was in December with 130 full-time employees. Despite this, however, the downward trend in the economy continued. Bottle Hollow Resort announced it was closing because of financial problems; Ashton Brothers also closed its doors after being Vernal's main retail store for generations; the large Gibson's store closed after eleven years of operation.[12] White River Shale closed its Vernal and Salt Lake City offices. From 1 July 1985 to 1 July 1986 the county lost 1,000 in population.[13]

Plummeting oil prices in 1986 hit the county's economy hard. The rock-bottom price for oil was blamed on a global oil war among international oil-cartel member nations to secure a larger portion of the world market. Falling oil prices also nibbled away at local phosphate plant employment. By the end of 1987 Uintah County's outmigration rate of 4.9 percent was the highest in Utah.

The Ashley Valley Food Pantry was organized to help the needy during this 1986 bust period. The pantry is staffed by volunteers and service is provided to senior citizens, disabled, and low- or no-income persons. These individuals receive a box of food per month and delivery is made to shut-ins. In 1993 a grant was obtained and a building was purchased on Highway 40. The food pantry is run by contributions from businesses, companies, churches, scouts, schools, library, and private donations. Most of the food is secured from the Utah State Food Bank. Federal Emergency Management funds also help in the funding.

The following chart reflects the employment picture at the end of 1994. The total employment figure for industry of non-agriculture

in Uintah County was 7,393 people, which was a 2.3 percent increase over 1993.

Jobs	*Workers*	*Percent*
Trade	1,834	25
Finance, insurance & real estate	115	2
Services	1,535	21
Government	1,806	23
Mining	1,099	15
Construction	204	3
Manufacturing	212	3
Transportation & Utilities	588	8

The above figures do not include agriculture and self-employment, which are estimated to be 1,750 total—with 1,100 self-employed and 650 employed in agriculture, bringing the total estimated employment figure for 1994 to 9,143.[14]

Technological developments in transportation and communications moved Uintah County out of relative isolation into the world community. In a sense, the twentieth century really began for Uintah County in 1905 when John W. Pope went to Denver, purchased an automobile, and had it shipped to Dragon. It took him two days to drive the automobile to Vernal from Dragon where residents greeted the arrival of the county's first car. The machine was used to haul passengers to celebrations and to resorts in the vicinity of Vernal. By 1917, Uintah Basin residents owned 182 automobiles including eighty Fords, fifty Buicks, twenty-five Overlands, ten Oaklands, ten Dodges, and seven Studebakers. There were also four trucks of unknown make and eight Buick three-ton trucks.[15]

The natural scenic beauty of the area is a tremendous asset, and with the introduction of automobiles tourism became a large and growing industry limited only by the availability of vehicles and roads. An ocean-to-ocean highway was designated in 1914 which would cross Utah. Increased funds began to be spent improving roads.

The establishment of Dinosaur National Monument in 1915 was a forerunner of many attractions that would be developed to enhance the area as a tourist destination. It was estimated that thousands of

tourists would visit Vernal during the summer of 1915, so the old Main Street hitching posts were removed and forty street lights installed to improve the appearance of downtown Vernal.

The development of the dinosaur quarry east of Jensen made it possible for visitors to view the actual quarrying of dinosaur bones. In 1940, 10928 visitors toured this site and in 1994 the number of visitors had grown to 314,117.

The Utah Field House of Natural History on Vernal's Main Street is another popular tourist attraction. It opened in 1947 and houses many natural and human artifacts from the area. In 1962 three life-size "action" groups of dinosaurs were brought to the field house and an addition was made to provide a spectacular blacklight exhibit for the florescent mineral collection. These projects helped to make the museum one of America's outstanding natural-history attractions. Since then the permanent exhibit has been greatly expanded to included the Dinosaur Gardens, which is a replica of a tropical habitat for dinosaurs. The gardens are inhabited by fourteen life-sized dinosaur models. A steady flow of visitors passes through the gardens all summer, and during the winter holiday season many local and out-of-county visitors come to see the gardens glow with thousands of colored lights.

In 1966 the Ute Indian Tribe applied for a grant to build a $1.2 million tourist-recreation complex on Highway 40 near Fort Duchesne. Groundbreaking for the Bottle Hollow Resort took place in 1968 and work began on the $1`.5 million project. The resort was built on the north end of 420-acre Bottle Hollow Reservoir and offers a swimming pool, cultural exhibits, convention facilities, and a dinner theater.

The Western Park Complex opened in 1991 and houses a museum along with the Outlaw Trail productions each July as well as other activities, including rodeos, livestock shows, horse shows, and county fairs. The facility is also used for many social events and meetings.

Many tourists take time to visit the Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum, which was established in the old rock tithing house on North Vernal Avenue in 1951. In 1958 the building was moved to Second South and Fifth West, where an addition was built to house

an enlarged museum. Also the local history center at the county library with its collection of newspaper microfilm, local history items, and individual life histories attracts many tourists searching for traces of ancestors or just looking to find more about the area. The Outlaw Trail History Center is also located there and attracts enthusiasts from all over the world.

Vernal's chamber of commerce greatly enhanced the beauty of Vernal by placing and helping to maintain numerous flower pots along Main Street. Locust trees also were planted. During the summer the abundant colorful growth entices tourists to prolong their visit.

As Uintah County plans for the twenty-first century, oil, mining, and agriculture will continue to be the major factors in the area's economy. With the comparatively new tourist industry expanding, tourism will have an ever-increasing role in the new century. It will be unlikely that the county can escape entirely the boom-bust cycles that have characterized most of the twentieth-century experience; but, with greater economic diversity and more experienced planning, perhaps these cycles can be moderated.

ENDNOTES

1. *Vernal Express,* 12 July 1934.

2. Ibid., 31 March 1938.

3. Walter G. Busch, unpublished history of his life, including his time in the local CCC camp. Copy located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 237, which also includes other material on the CCC.

4. Civilian Conservation Corps, Camp DG-31 Vernal, Utah, letter to Ashley Valley Woolgrowers Annual Convention, 18 February 1938; notes taken at Uintah County Historical Society meeting, 13 July 1985, where several former CCC members gave input, material located in Uintah County Library Regional Center, folder 237.

5. *Vernal Express,* 14 December 1939.

6. Ibid., 5 January 1961.

7. Ibid., 22 June, 16 November, 23 November, 28 December 1972, and 27 December 1973.

8. Ibid., 27 December 1973.

9. Ibid., 27 February, 15 May, 25 September, 27 November 1975, and 16 June 1977.

10. Ibid., 8 January, 19 February, 5 March, 19 March, 26 March, 9 April, 16 July, 13 August, 3 September, 24 September, 8 October, and 31 December 1981.

11. Ibid., 6 January, 2 March, 7 March, 13 April, 2 May, 4 May, 16 May, 26 September, 3 October, 17 October, 7 December, and 12 December 1984.

12. Ibid., 11 January, 25 January, 20 February, 6 March, 24 May, 31 July, 9 August, 9 October, and 20 December 1985.

13. Ibid., 18 April, 30 April, 17 June, 12 September, 17 September, 5 November, 3 December 1986, and 28 January 1987.

14. Figures provided by Judy Chambley of Vernal Job Service.

15. Byron Loosle, "The Ashley National Forest." (Unpublished manuscript located in the Regional History Center).

8

Horse Bits to Computer Bytes

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS

A network of Indian trails crisscrossed the Uinta Basin when the first white settlers arrived. These routes were gradually enlarged by explorers, government employees, soldiers, and settlers. Eventually a number of roads were developed that connected the basin with other populated areas.

In the early trapping and trading era, Antoine Robidoux followed Indian trails from New Mexico to the area and built a fort called Fort Uintah near Whiterocks. He eventually improved the trails to bring wagons to the area. He crossed Indian trails over the Uinta Mountains to Fort Bridger, Wyoming—one of which went over Gilbert Peak. Indian trails over the Wasatch Mountains were also used by trappers and traders.

The first major road survey through the Uinta Basin from Denver to Salt Lake City was conducted by Captain E.L. Berthoud, a civil engineer from Golden, Colorado, with Jim Bridger as his scout. The overland mail bill was enacted by Congress on 2 March 1861, just two days after the Territory of Colorado was created. Denver was three years old. To that territory and its infant metropolis came the

opportunity to be placed upon the main western thoroughfare of the nation if a practicable pass could be found through the central Rocky Mountains. A route through Denver for the Pony Express and the daily stagecoach would greatly enhance the growth of the city. Berthoud and his party left Denver on 6 July 1861 and traveled to the Yampa River headwaters through Twenty-mile Park to where Hayden and Craig, Colorado, are now located. The river was followed to about the mouth of Snake River, where the surveyors turned southwest to the White River and followed it to the Green, then up the Uinta River. They crossed the Wasatch Range, descended along the Provo River, and then continued to Salt Lake City. Berthoud reported that a good wagon road with practicable grade could be easily and quickly built to Provo. He gave the distance as 426 miles and estimated that the first-class road would cost about $100,000. However, the survey was not completed in time, and the overland mail route was put into service over the old emigrant trail via South Pass, Wyoming, leaving the Uinta Basin off the route.

The next company organized to build a wagon road across Berthoud Pass left Salt Lake City on 3 June 1865 led by a Col. Johns of the California Volunteers with 150 men and twenty-two wagons. The route followed was that explored by Berthoud and Bridger in 1861. Nearly four months were consumed in marking the route and making it passable for wagons. Today U.S. Highway 40 crosses Berthoud Pass following the trail marked out by Berthoud and Bridger through the Uinta Basin.[1]

The first major wagon route came into the valley when the Uintah Indian Agency was located at Whiterocks. This was not the result of any organized surveys or construction work; it developed piecemeal after the headquarters was moved into the area in the fall of 1868. In those early days, agency employees searched out a passable route from Heber to the agency location, following Indian trails and natural routes wherever possible to reduce construction work.

The road was still little more than a trail in the late 1870s when Agent John J. Critchlow traveled to Whiterocks to manage the agency. He complained of the deplorable condition of the route in his annual report, writing, "It is a misnomer to call it a road." He asked for five thousand dollars to survey and construct a new road to the agency.

Reports give no indication the five thousand dollars was ever granted.[2]

The route to Whiterocks began at Heber, Utah, and wound up through Daniel's Canyon, crossing and recrossing the creek numerous times. The road passed approximately two miles north of Fruitland and about six miles north of Duchesne City. It went about three miles southeast of Roosevelt, then east to Montes Creek, crossing the creek nearly three-quarters of a mile below the present site of the Montes Reservoir spillway. From this point, the road closely followed the present highway north to Whiterocks.

The earliest route leading into Ashley from the Indian agency at Whiterocks was the Dodds Twist Road located by Pardon Dodds, Morris Evans, and John Blankenship in 1872 or 1873. This road commenced on the Heber-Whiterocks road approximately one-fourth mile below the Indian agency and ran southeastward across the river bottoms to Whiterocks River, passing immediately north of the present Fort Robidoux historical monument. From the fort, it pursued a southeasterly course, passing about one mile southwest of Tridell and crossing Deep Creek just south of LaPoint. It continued southeast about two miles to the foot of LaPoint Bench, then crossed over the mesa to Halfway Hollow. The road crossed the hollow just below Steamboat Rock and proceeded eastward to Twelve-Mile Wash, then north up the east fork of the wash to the present LaPoint-Vernal highway, and easterly through the gap west of Maeser to the Dodds homestead. The route followed the course of the wash bottom up the east fork of Twelve-Mile Wash, and it was this section, known as the Dodds Twist, that gave the road its name.[3]

The road to the valley was later shortened by travelers who forded the Uinta River at the old Daniel's Crossing, north of Fort Duchesne, and followed Deep Creek to its junction with the Whiterocks-Ashley road southeast of LaPoint.

Sometime between 1875 and 1879 another route was established between Whiterocks and Ashley Valley via Dry Fork Canyon. Beginning at the point where the Dodds Twist crossed Deep Creek, this road ran north along the west fork of that small stream to the Basor (later Thoroughbred) Ranch, then eastward over Pine Ridge to Dry Fork, and down Dry Fork Canyon to Ashley Valley.[4] A more

direct course between Whiterocks and Dry Fork was later used which led northward from Whiterocks about five miles, then east past the Little Water Coal Mine, and across Mosby Creek to intersect the Deep Creek Road near the Thoroughbred Ranch.

Not all of the early settlers arrived from the west, however. Many entered the basin from the north, following a rough but passable route leading south from Wyoming across the Uinta Mountains. In 1865 Major Noyes Baldwin, commanding officer at Fort Bridger, established a road from that post to Brown's Park. This route ran south from the fort and then east to Henry's Fork River near Manila, Utah. The road followed Henry's Fork nearly to the Green River, then turned north and crossed the Green about three miles above the confluence of the two streams. It then ran east up Spring Creek, through Minnie's Gap, and around the base of Richardson Mountain into Clay Basin. At that point, it joined an alternate route coming south from Green River, Wyoming.

From Clay Basin, the road went south down Jessie Ewing Canyon into Brown's Park. To proceed to the Uinta Basin the traveler climbed up Sear's Canyon to Pot Creek, then continued south past Flynn's Point to Diamond Springs. The route then came south over the Diamond Mountain rim to Bowery Spring, which is located just under the rim and about one-half mile east of Diamond Mountain Road. A trail and later a wagon route then led southwest down the face of the mountain to where Big Brush Creek forked. One fork followed the creek to its junction with the Green River and turned south to Jensen; the other crossed Brush Creek and continued southwest, passing over a small ridge and entering a hollow called Paddy's Gap.[5] The wagon track followed Paddy's Gap to its head and then over the Buckskin Hills into Ashley Valley, entering the valley at the old David Karren ranch in Ashley Ward, now the LDS farm and cannery at 2178 East 1500 North.

When the early stores, saloons, and other mercantile enterprises were established in the county, the proprietors had to haul merchandise into the area by wagons from Wyoming or Heber. The old Indian trail around the south side of Blue Mountain known as the "Old Rawlins Trail" was the route used by teamsters who had secured government contracts to haul supplies from the Union Pacific station at Rawlins, Wyoming, to Fort Thornburgh and Ouray trading posts.

Part of this trail was close to the present alignment of Highway 40, south of Blue Mountain.[6]

Later scouting parties were ordered to explore other possible routes over which supplies could be brought into Fort Thornburgh. Explorations were made from the military post which was then on the White River to Green River, Wyoming, to Fort Bridger, and to Park City, Utah, to determine which would be the best route. Park City was chosen. The government built a depot and warehouses at the site and supplies were brought from that depot.[7]

When Fort Thornburgh was moved to the head of Ashley Valley, it was decided that a closer route would be over the Uinta Mountains to Fort Bridger, Wyoming, about ten miles south of the railhead at Carter Station on the Union Pacific Railroad. The Ute Indians used two main trails in traveling north to Wyoming: Lodge Pole Trail ran from a point near the old Burnt Fork post office in Wyoming to Ashley; the other trail crossed west of Gilbert's Peak north of Whiterocks and was known as the Soldier Trail. It was used by Captain R. B. Marcy in 1857 on his trip from Wyoming to Taos, New Mexico, for emergency supplies for snowbound troops who had been on their way to Utah under Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston.[8] This route was found impracticable for a wagon road, so General George Crook, advised by Judge William A. Carter, chose the Lodge Pole Trail as the best route for the road and favored its construction for transporting troops and supplies.[9]

Judge Carter of Fort Bridger undertook to construct a passable road at his own expense in anticipation of the government later accepting and improving the road. By the late fall of 1881 Carter had succeeded in constructing a road following the Lodge Pole Trail across the mountains. Judge Carter became ill with pleurisy while at his camp on the creek that now bears his name and died shortly afterward at his home in Fort Bridger.

In 1882 the army awarded a contract to William A. Carter, Jr., son of Judge Carter, to freight supplies over the new road from Carter Station to Fort Thornburgh. On 1 May Carter left Fort Bridger with twenty-two six-mule teams and wagons; he arrived in Ashley Valley three weeks later. It was evident from the difficulties encountered during this trip that the route would have to be improved. Lt. R. H.

Young was sent from Fort Bridger with a detachment of troops to work on the road during the summer of 1882. They removed numerous large rocks from the right-of-way and laid a roadbed of logs across many of the swamps and marshes. Mules proved not adapted to all the problems encountered on this trip, so oxen were used, with "bull-whackers" instead of "mule skinners" for drivers.[10]

The next summer four companies of infantry from Fort Thornburgh labored on the road under the command of Major I.D. Russey. In addition to improving the roadway, these soldiers constructed corduroy roads across nearly all the high mountain meadows through which the route passed. William A. Carter, Jr., constructed a log cabin with a fireplace to serve as a way-station at the junction of Beaver and Carter creeks for the freighters traveling over the road.

This first route came down Taylor Mountain and Spring Creek to Ashley Creek, then along the creek to Fort Thornburgh. The army later established an alternate route commencing at Spring Creek. This road, which became the wagon route, led southeast into Steinaker Draw, then to the south, passing out of the mouth of the draw where Steinaker Dam is now located, and westward along the foot of the hills to Fort Thornburgh. The original track down Ashley Creek continued to be used as a horse trail.[11]

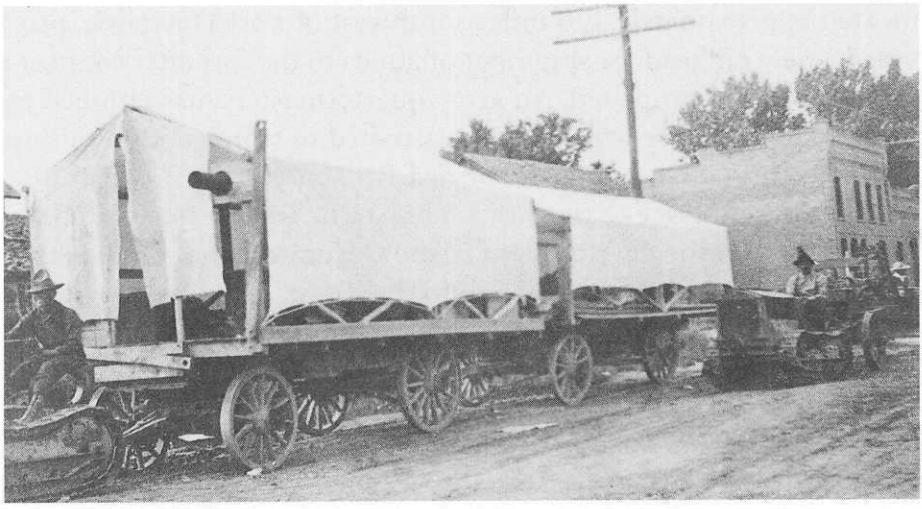
The War Department abandoned Fort Thornburgh in 1884, but the road continued to be used, with contractors hauling more than one million pounds of supplies over the road from Carter Station to the site of Fort Duchesne in 1886.[12] From 1887 to about 1900 ore from the Dyer Mine on the south slope of the Uinta Mountains was freighted over the Thornburgh Road to the railhead at Carter Station.

In 1884 Uintah County constructed a new road leading into Ashley Valley from the west.[13] This route began at the Heber-Whiterocks road near the Dry Gulch Creek ford southeast of modern Roosevelt and followed the creek east along the bottom of the hollow to the Uinta River near the present location of Fort Duchesne. From the river the road led east to Sand Ridge, passing south of present-day Gusher through the Strip and onto Halfway Hollow. At this point, the route was north and nearly parallel to the original Highway 40. Approximately three miles west of Asphalt Ridge the road turned

northeast across Dog Valley, over Asphalt Ridge south of where the cut is now, and into Ashley Valley at about 5000 South. It continued on 5000 South east to 1500 West and turned north to the 1500 South and 1500 West intersection. The road turned east on 1500 South to 500 West, turning north past the tabernacle (purposely built by the LDS church there that it might be seen by all entering the town) then east down Main Street to Vernal Avenue. It went out South Vernal Avenue to 1500 South. The main road turned east at 1500 South and Vernal Avenue and came out on the present Naples highway at 1500 East and 1500 South. From here the road turned south on 1500 East, the present Naples highway, straight to 5000 South, turning east and up a dugway on the hill. The road crossed Ashley Creek about one-fourth mile north of the present Ashley Creek bridge and continued east to the yellow hill at 6620 East Highway 40. The road then turned south, following the hill to about the present highway and went up an old dugway and straight east to Jensen. After crossing the Jensen Bridge, the road followed south along the river to the Powell Ranch, then east to Cockleburr Valley, through Powder Wash north of present Highway 40 to the K Ranch and the Utah-Colorado state line.

Many county road appropriations were spent on the Valley Hill Dugway west of Vernal. Evidence discloses five or six parallel old dugways at that site. One part of the old "twists" on the right side of Highway 40 coming up to the lookout was named after commissioner Al Hatch, who with his horse marked out a dugway with many sharp curves. In 1924, $48,000 in federal funds was obtained to construct the first dugway on Asphalt Ridge. This graveled highway remained in use until 1940, but it featured dangerous curves and had been the scene of many accidents including fatalities. Funds were obtained to take the highway out from Vernal on the present route, paving the four miles west of Vernal. This route traveled west to 800 West where it made a gradual inclination past the Glines LDS chapel to 1500 South where it joined the old road. In 1965 contractor L.C. Stevenson made the straight cut over the first hill out of town and over the hill at 2700 West, joining the old highway and continuing over the old dugway. In 1967 contractors Whiting & Haymond Company made the large cut and view area on Asphalt Ridge.[14]

When Fort Duchesne was established in 1886, the government



Fred Feltch pulling road construction equipment with cat in 1918. (UCLRHC, C. J. Neal collection)

first supplied the new post from Fort Bridger via the Thornburgh-Carter Road and from Park City over the Heber Road. It became evident that better mail delivery, telegraph service, and good roads for freight delivery were needed to the fort. The War Department recognized that the Price-Myton road, which followed an old trail used by Indians and whites prior to 1886, would be a much shorter route to bring supplies for the soldiers at Fort Duchesne, and units were dispatched from the fort to work on this road. The route went from Bridges (now Myton) through Wells Draw to the head of Gate Canyon, through that canyon to Nine Mile Canyon, and southwest over the rim of the canyon. It then followed Soldier Canyon to Wellington, a few miles south of Price. This is approximately the same course State Highway 53 later followed. In 1886 and 1887 the army detailed soldiers to improve the road and construct a telegraph line from the railroad to the post.[15] Nearly all the freight entering or leaving the area traveled this route until a road was completed over Indian Canyon in 1905.

Freighting

The Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad was completed between Denver and Salt Lake City in 1883, and the town of Price,

located approximately 120 miles southwest of Fort Duchesne, provided a new railhead for shipment of goods to the fort after connecting roads were completed. An army quartermaster was stationed at Price at a warehouse which was constructed to store goods awaiting shipment to the Uinta Basin. For nearly twenty years steady traffic passed through Price to the basin. This traffic was increased in both directions with the development of the Gilsonite mines on the Strip in 1889. The difficult journey required six days each way for freight wagons in good weather. The trip was made through arid country, so feed and water for the draft animals had to be carried.[16]

Early residents supplemented their incomes by using their wagons and teams for freighting. Many were given all the business they could handle. Most of these freighters were farmers who engaged in freighting on a sporadic, informal, and often temporary basis. It was often necessary to "double" in order to traverse difficult stretches of road. The outfits usually consisted of two canvas-covered wagons, one trailing the other, pulled by a four-horse team hitched by twos. Occasionally a third, smaller wagon was included. Some freighters, however, used a two-horse team and a single wagon; and they could haul as much as 5,000 pounds, depending upon the nature of the cargo. With four horses and two wagons, a skillful teamster could haul as much as 11,000 pounds.

Boys as young as fourteen years of age who could be spared from farm work sometimes hauled freight with single teams and wagons during the spring and summer months to help support their families.[17] It was not unusual for farmers to spend part of the winter hauling freight in and out of Vernal. When a freighter received an order to bring a load of merchandise from Price, he generally tried to obtain cargo for the outward journey. Typical out-going loads could include honey; sacks of copper ore; eggs, packed in barrels of grain; cured ham; pork; wool; alfalfa seed; and, the major commodity, Gilsonite, picked up from mines on the Strip.

Without railroad service, all merchandise was freighted in on wagons. Much of the area's commerce used parcel post, which was shipped on the train to Dragon and then came into Vernal on freight wagons. This practice elicited some interesting comments in the local paper, such as, "Parcel post continues to come in by the four-horse

load," and "Government losing $36,000 a year on Basin Parcel Post."[18] In June 1916 readers were told "Up to fifty-pound limit, a typical day's load was: 10,000 pounds of salt, 12,500 pounds of flour, 8,800 pounds of sugar, together with other of the following articles: groceries, blacksmith tools, automobile parts, hardware, nails, pitchforks, brooms, water hydrants, oranges, fresh strawberries, garden truck vegetables, cherries, tires, feather beds, fruit jars, and magazines." Turkeys were shipped parcel post as far as the Pacific Coast. Even dry cleaning was sent to Salt Lake by parcel post. The average rate paid for freighting at the time was $1.00 per one hundred pounds but varied from $0.75 to $1.25. A good freighter could usually make about eighty dollars a week.

Under favorable conditions, teamsters could drive a loaded outfit thirty miles a day; with adverse conditions or steep grades, ten to fifteen miles was a good day's travel. A round trip between Vernal and Price could vary from ten to twenty-five days depending on the weather, the route traveled, and the wagon load. Sometimes it was necessary to wait several days at the warehouse for a load. The freighters camped by the roadside at night, if possible under ledges or in other places partially sheltered from wind and weather. Way-stations were located about every fifteen or twenty miles along the route, but freighters had to stop and make camp wherever they were when dark overtook them. When freighters camped near a way-station during inclement weather, station attendants often allowed them to unroll their bedrolls and sleep in one of the buildings.

The way-station and campground at Halfway Hollow, fifteen miles west of Vernal, was the only place water was available between Vernal and the Uinta River near Fort Duchesne. The water at Halfway Hollow was hauled to the station from a spring located about two miles up the hollow and stored in an underground tank. It cost fifteen cents to water a two-horse team and twenty-five cents for a four-horse team. Finally a well was dug in the middle of the wash. A metal barrel with a lid was placed in the top of the well. It subsequently never washed out when floods came down the wash.[19]

As saloons were well represented among the business establishments of the Uinta Basin, it was a rare occasion when at least one of the wagons at a campground was not carrying a few barrels of liquor.

Most veteran teamsters had long known a foolproof method for tapping a whiskey barrel, and in the evening, as soon as the horses were cared for, one of the men often tapped one of these casks. A small nail was first pounded into the barrelhead to make an air vent and then pulled out and driven through the side of the container. The nail was withdrawn and a straw inserted in the hole. A small bucket or pot was then placed beneath it. After the desired amount of liquor had drained out, the straw was removed and a small piece of wood such as a matchstick driven into the opening to plug the hole. The match was cut off flush and a little dirt rubbed over the spot to complete the job. The men then sat around the fire drinking whiskey and telling stories.[20]

The freighters brought most of their provisions for the trip from home, filling grub boxes with homemade bread, jams and jellies, bottled fruit, potatoes, onions and other vegetables, eggs, fresh or cured ham and bacon, mutton, or beef. Teamsters usually carried their eggs in a bucket of oats, putting in a layer of grain, then adding alternate layers of eggs and oats until the pail was full. This method worked well unless the road was unusually rough, when the eggs sometimes worked together and broke. Feed for horses, including hay and grain, had to be carried. A canvas tarp wrapped around the bedroll served as both a groundcloth to keep out the moisture and a top covering to ward off the dew or rain. A wagon iron served as a small anvil to shape horseshoes if necessary and to rivet the harness when it broke, as it often did. Rifles were an important item, and a keg or two of drinking water was fastened to the side of the wagon box.

Life on the freight roads was arduous and hazardous for both teamsters and horses. In summer, heat, dust, and insects made life miserable, and the danger of being caught in a canyon or wash by a flash flood was ever present. In the winter the men and animals suffered from the cold and snow. One freighter claimed they had to hitch twenty horses on one wagon to break open a trail. Sometimes it was many degrees below zero, and the snow would be five or six feet deep.[21] In the spring and fall the freighters often had deep mud to plow through. The possibility always existed of the wagons breaking down, of the teamsters becoming ill or suffering an injury, or of the horses becoming sick or lame. Occasionally a wagon would slip off

the rim trail and plunge into the canyon. All the driver could do was jump free and then go down and free the horses that had not already broken away from the traces.

In 1896 officials of the Union Pacific concluded that a good deal of the freight was being lost to rival Denver and Rio Grande Western Railroad, so they sent a scouting party over the regular route through Brown's Park to Vernal. They discovered on the way back that the haul from Vernal could be cut to eighty-five miles by leaving the Brown's Park road and going through McKee Draw, then crossing the Green River near the Lewis Ferry, and then going by Spring Creek, down Currant Creek, and up along the Green River through Firehole Basin.

In June 1896 C.B. Maxwell, traveling freight agent for the Union Pacific, made a trip with his wife to Ashley Valley, where they spent several days interviewing local merchants, stockmen, and ranchmen. They found the Ashley people unanimously in favor of a northern outlet to railroad facilities because it would be a shorter route than the one to the Rio Grande Western. Furthermore, along this route feed and water were plentiful for teams, while between Vernal and Price lay forty miles of the worst kind of dry desert road without water or feed. Mrs. Maxwell interviewed many merchants and was informed by a salesman in a Vernal store that "thousands of dollars worth of damage was suffered annually by the merchants because of the ruinous sand and dust that came in contact with the goods and fineries while crossing this desert."[22]

Lewis R. Dyer, manager of the Victoria copper mine, expected his company to haul thousands of tons of ore over the road to the railroad and was very much in favor of the route. Maxwell believed that large quantities of Ashley's fine vegetables and fruits as well as tons of honey would be used by the people of Green River and Rock Springs, Wyoming, bringing a new market to Vernal. Also 300,000 pounds of wool were freighted from the valley annually and more than 1.5 million pounds of merchandise were shipped into Ashley yearly. It was believed that the wagon bridge across the Green River and Black's Fork was the forerunner to the establishment of a road that would prove to be a great commercial artery to Ashley Valley.[23]

An early Forest Service map shows a road down to the Green

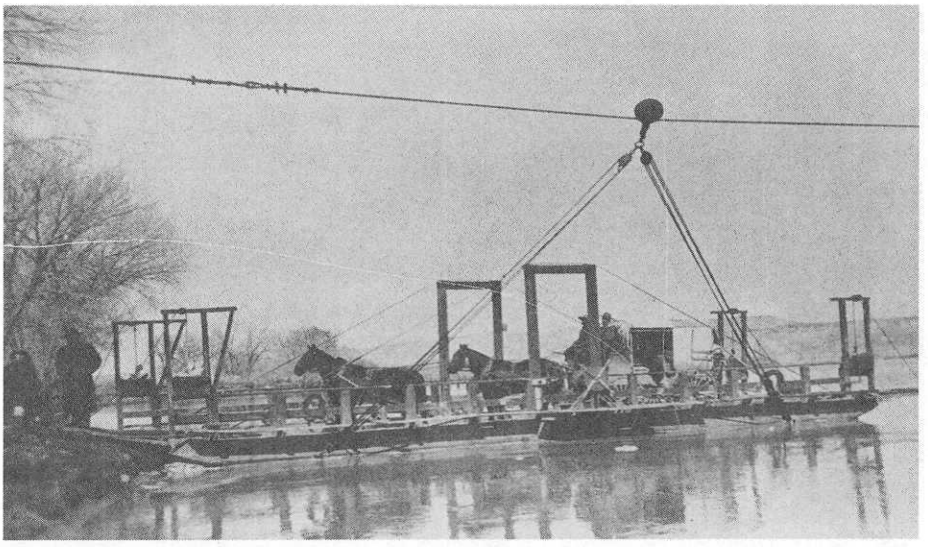
River below Cedar Springs that went up through Dutch John Gap. If this road was used for freighting, it must have been a steep and rough haul. Nevertheless, the Union Pacific had plans to build a railroad along this route and drew maps showing its proposed location. The plan never materialized, but it would have resulted in one of the most spectacular mountain railroads in the West.[24]

By 1905 a passable route had been built from Duchesne through Indian Canyon to the railroad at Colton, a station located north and west of Castle Gate. The stage then came to Uintah County from Colton Station. Many early residents used this road to enter the basin after the Uintah Indian Reservation was opened to homesteading in 1905. Although this route to Price was shorter than the Nine Mile Road, it was often impassable because of deep snow and avalanches.

Railroad and Trucking

Parcel post and regular freight were shipped in exclusively by freight wagon until 1904 when the majority of freight was shipped closer by train on the narrow-gauge railroad. The railway provided both freight and passenger service to the growing basin. The Uintah Railway, a narrow-gauge railroad, beginning in western Colorado at Mack and continuing over some of the steepest grades and sharpest curves ever built for a railroad line, was constructed in 1903. The railroad was built by the Barber Asphalt Company between its Gilsonite mining properties located along the White River in the southeastern corner of Uintah County and the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad's main line near Grand Junction, Colorado. It ran fifty-five miles from Mack, Colorado, to the Black Dragon Mine, where a small community named Dragon soon developed. The terminal was about sixty-five miles from Vernal and Fort Duchesne, and it became a major railhead and supply point for the eastern Uinta Basin. In 1911 the company extended the rails ten miles farther north to Watson, which served as the terminus until 1939 when the railroad ceased operations.

During 1904 and 1905 the Uintah Railway Company constructed 112 miles of roads leading from the railhead at Dragon to the Ashley and Ouray valleys, where they connected with county roads leading to Vernal, Fort Duchesne, and Whiterocks. Two obstacles, the Green



Stage crossing Green River on Alhandra ferry. (UCLRHC collection)

and White rivers, had to be crossed. The White River was crossed by spanning it with a toll bridge at Ignatio. The wooden bridge was taken out by ice jams and floods in 1912. A metal bridge was later constructed. Freighters often forded a few miles below the bridge during periods of low water to avoid the toll; however, freighters who drove for Uintah Freightway crossed free. To cross the Green River, ferryboat toll stations were constructed at Alhandra, about twelve miles south of Jensen, and at Ouray. Bob Johnston and James McNaughton operated the ferry at Alhandra. Uintah Railway Company organized the Uintah Toll Road Company in November 1906 to operate and maintain the roads, bridges, and ferries and then established freight and stage lines.[25]

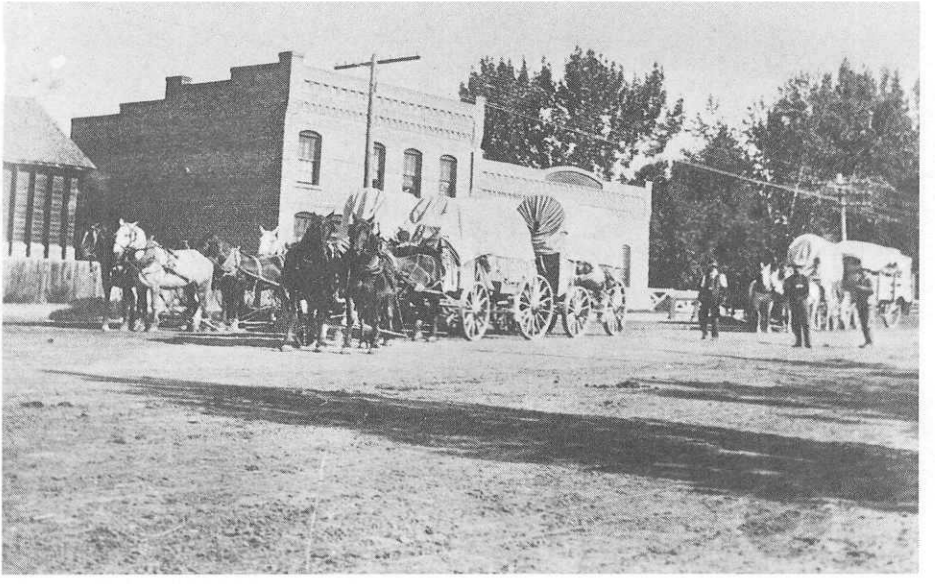
Two ferries operated by Ira Burton and Lars Jensen were already in operation on the Green River at Jensen at the time the railroad arrived, but they were farther to the north. They catered to cattlemen who were driving wagons and animals to ranches on Blue Mountain and the Rangely area.

After the Uintah Railway was constructed, much of the freight entering the basin came through Dragon. Uintah Railway freight lines carried part of the freight, but many merchants still preferred to have the local freighters haul merchandise from the railroad.



Uintah Railway Narrow Gauge train on Baxter Pass in 1917. (UCLRHC, C. J. Neal collection)

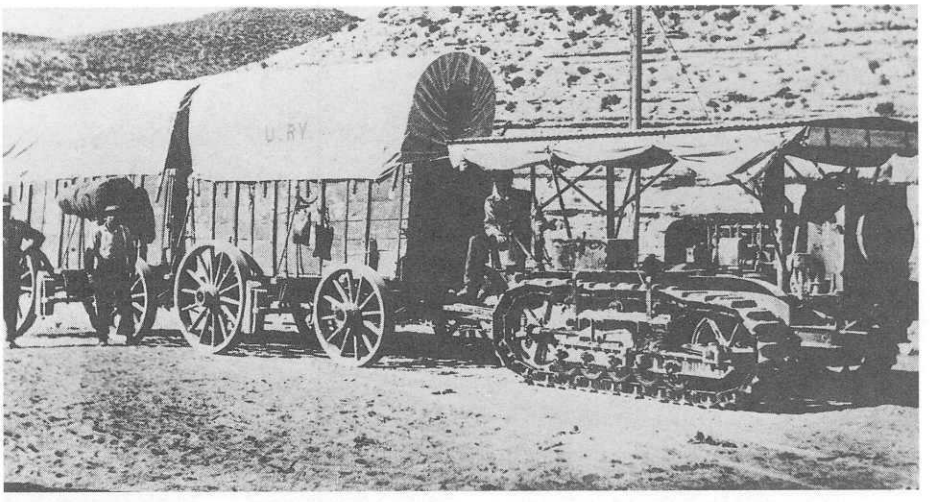
Uintah Railway built way-stations at Chipeta Wells on the road to Fort Duchesne and at Kennedy's Hole on the route to Vernal. These way-stations consisted of stables, barns, and inns where travelers could obtain food and lodging and company teamsters could procure feed and shelter for their animals. A round trip from Vernal or Fort Duchesne could usually be made in between four and seven days. A teamster leaving either of these communities in the morning with empty wagons could plan on taking a noon rest stop at the Ouray or Alhandra ferryboat stations on the Green River. Camp the first night was at either Kennedy's Hole or Chipeta Wells way-station about thirty miles out. Unless delayed by breakdowns or other difficulties, Ignatio at the White River toll-bridge crossing would be reached by noon the second day. The next day the freighters would travel through the southern edge of the Rabbit Hills and along Evacuation Wash, arriving that night at Dragon. The night would be spent in the campground located on the outskirts of town. The freighters who worked for the Uintah Railway were issued a book of tickets good for eating or sleeping at the boarding houses along the route.[26]



Freight wagons leaving Uintah Railway Station which was built in anticipation of trains that never reached Vernal. (UCLRHC collection)

Although the company constructed roads from the Green River to connect with county thoroughfares near Vernal and Fort Duchesne, only those segments between the Green River and Dragon were actually operated as toll roads. The cost of a trip from Vernal or Fort Duchesne to Dragon with freight wagons varied from $2.50 to $3.50 depending upon the number of teams and wagons in the outfit. The crossing of the Green River by ferry at Alhandra or Ouray and the White River by bridge at Ignatio constituted the major part of the expense.

The railroad company tried to make passengers as comfortable as possible, building a nice hotel at Dragon. Another hotel was built at Watson when the railroad was extended to that location. The railroad planned to eventually continue on to Vernal. A railroad station was built on the corner at 80 North Vernal Avenue in anticipation of the railroad which never arrived. The station (which still stands) was then used by the Uintah Railway Company as a stagecoach and freight station. Vernal is still more than 100 miles from the nearest railway. A large pasture in Vernal was owned by the company. The company had acquired many teams and wagons, and by the end of

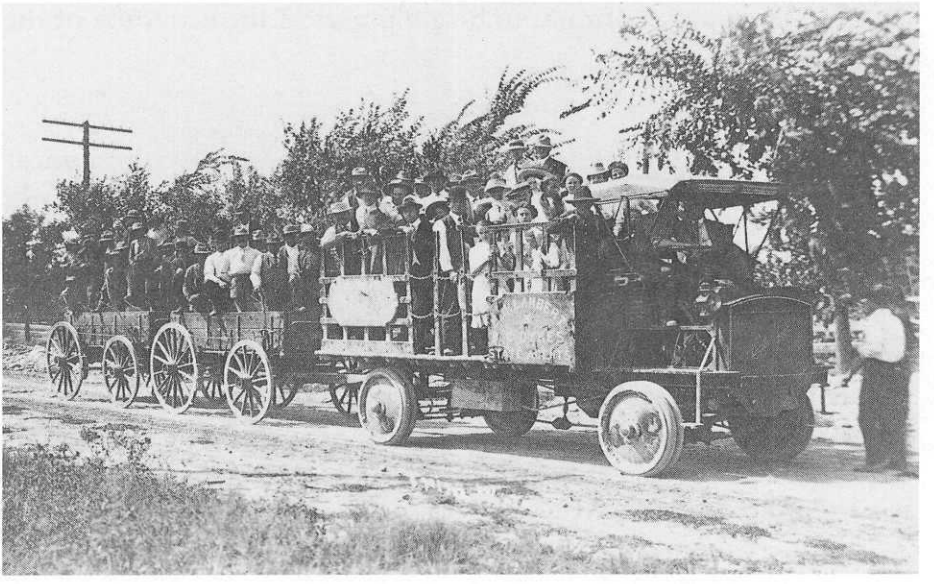


The first "cat" tractor in the Vernal area. Its first and only trip from Watson to Vernal took 27 days. (UCLRHC, American Gilsonite Company collection)

1906 owned over 160 head of horses, most of them large freight horses.[27] In 1910 the company replaced its stagecoaches with automobiles. In June of that year railroad officials met with Uintah County commissioners to discuss the possibility of a joint effort to improve the roads from Dragon so motor vehicles could be used in place of freight wagons. In 1911 the company purchased some solid-tire Mack trucks to haul cargo from Watson to Vernal and Fort Duchesne; but trucks proved to be unsuitable for the muddy roads.

About this time, the freight line purchased both a Holt caterpillar tractor and a large steam-driven tractor to pull freight wagon trains.[28] Although these machines were used for a year or so, they also proved unsatisfactory. By 1916, however, roads had been improved and the company was phasing out the horse-drawn wagons and successfully using trucks to haul freight from the railhead to various towns in the basin. It was not long before enterprising individuals saw the opportunity to purchase motor vehicles and establish motorized freight lines. By 1920 only a few horse-drawn freight wagons were still on the roads.

Near the end of 1927, Sterling Transportation Company placed six new trucks in service in addition to the large fleet already maintained by the Eastern Utah Transportation Company, which operated



Early 1900s, one of Vernal's first trucks pulling two wagons loaded with people. (UCLRHC collection, Trim photo)

truck lines between Price and the Uinta Basin. Stations were established at Duchesne, Price, Salt Lake, Roosevelt, Myton, Fort Duchesne, and Vernal to service the trucks.[29]

After the railroad closed down on 16 May 1939, all freight was hauled by trucks. The railway cars which had been used for many years to transport the basin's lamb crop to the market were sold for corn cribs in Colorado. The track became scrap metal and was used during World War II. The trucking business grew as the county grew. In the 1940s the Sterling Transportation Company had twelve trucks and employed twenty men hauling freight and Gilsonite. The Comet Motor Express out of Craig, Colorado, had three trucks making shipments from Denver to Vernal every other day. Trucks were used to haul cattle to market, and Victor Wilkins owned the major livestock trucking company. As the oil industry grew, many large tankers hauled oil along U.S. 40. Phosphate and Gilsonite became major products hauled out of the county by trucks.

Articles appeared in the *Vernal Express* nearly every decade telling of plans for a railroad to come to Vernal; however, these plans always fell through and no railroad has ever been extended to Uintah

County. Trucking continues to be a big part of the economy of the county.

Highways

Technological developments in transportation and communications moved Uintah County out of relative isolation into the world community. In a sense, the twentieth century really began for Uintah County in 1905 when John W. Pope went to Denver, purchased an automobile, and had it shipped to Dragon. It took him two days to drive the automobile to Vernal from Dragon, where residents greeted the arrival of the county's first car. The machine was used to haul passengers to celebrations and to resorts in the vicinity of Vernal.[30] By 1917 Uinta Basin residents owned 182 automobiles including eighty Fords, fifty Buicks, twenty-five Overlands, ten Oaklands, ten Dodges, and seven Studebakers. There were also four trucks of unknown make and eight Buick three-ton trucks.[31]

The natural scenic beauty of the area is a tremendous asset, and with the introduction of automobiles tourism became a large and growing industry limited only by the availability of vehicles and roads. An ocean-to-ocean highway was designated in 1914 which would cross Utah. Increased funds began to be spent improving the roads.

The present system of highways in Utah developed in stages. Up to about 1910, county commissioners had full control over county roads, although the roads were often little more than trails cut by wagon wheels. County commissioners generally were interested only in improving well-traveled trails or roads to and from the county seat and through thickly settled parts of the counties. One folktale is told about the bad road conditions on the road going through Naples.

> John D. Karren owned an eighty acre farm in Naples along the highway. He and his four sons had built a high levy to carry water the full width of the farm. In winter, snow often reached fence tops and so this levy worked as a dam and kept the spring runoff from going down the fields. As a result, this made the road almost bottomless.
>
> Legend has it that two men in Naples, Jedediah, who lived a quarter mile northwest of this muddy road, and Jeremiah, who

lived a quarter mile south were good friends and often visited each other.

One day as Jeremiah was walking along on top of the levy he noticed a hat. "Why that belongs to Jedediah," he said, "I must pick it up." He took hold of a willow and eased himself down through the mud. He picked up the hat and there was Jedediah's head sticking above the mud.

"Why Jed," he exclaimed, "I'll go get help and get you out of this mess!"

"Never mind, Jerry," said Jed, "I still have my feet in the stirrups and my horse will get through some way."

By the year 1910 the next stage of road development began with the state highway commission's goal to link the main highways in each county, so continuous thoroughfares would exist from one part of the state to another. The commission issued seven million dollars in bonds for highways, financed by the state license tax and, later, by the gasoline tax. Opposition was expressed by the legislature, as the outlying counties were afraid all the money would go to Salt Lake County for paving its roads. It was suggested that construction of roads begin at the Wyoming, Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, and Idaho state lines, working toward Salt Lake City; this might expedite the passage of the bill. If any money was left, it could be spent in Salt Lake County. The bill passed with this restriction and it worked well for the outlying counties.

A third phase came in 1920, with the introduction of a federal aid system established by an act of Congress, which provided federal aid for the establishment of a system of highways passing through several states. The state highway systems, which connected roads at county borders, were continued on a national basis, connecting highways at state borders. This project provided money to be used on the Vernal-Duchesne road in 1921. The dangerous Hatch dugway with its sharp curves was taken out under this program, but it would still be many years before that portion of the twisting road starting twelve miles out of Vernal was completely straightened out. Many accidents occurred on this twist in the 1940s, and residents were greatly relieved when this strip of road was improved.[32]

State highway commissioners planned the routes in Utah, cen-

tering all main highways—north, south, west, and east—through Salt Lake City, making it the hub of western travel.[33] The Victory Highway was the "spoke" that came through Uintah County. The Victory Highway was promoted about 1919 by Salt Lake and northern California interests to provide a straight line of travel from St. Louis, Kansas City, and Denver through Salt Lake City to Reno and San Francisco. It would be the shortest route between Washington, D.C., and San Francisco, crossing the center of the United States. The First World War had just ended, so the name "Victory Highway" was chosen for the route. A San Francisco man, Ben Blow, was named project manager and went over the entire route from San Francisco to the Atlantic Coast to organize local people in towns and cities to boost and promote the route. Victory Highway later became the first transcontinental highway to receive a U.S. highway number for its entire length from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast—U.S. Highway 40.

With the announcement of the new Victory Highway came opposition from within the state. Opposing it were the Utah State Highway Commission, the Associated Clubs of Southern Utah, and the towns of Price, Richfield, other southern Utah towns, and Grand Junction, Colorado. The route would decrease tourist trade on the Midland Trail, which came from Denver via Grand Junction and Price. Opponents also feared that the new route would take away the post office star route from Price to the Uinta Basin, as mail and express freight would go directly into the Uinta Basin via Heber and Daniel's Canyon. This is exactly what happened. Salt Lake City very much wanted this highway and waged a campaign against southern Utah for its construction. However, due to the strength of the opposition, U.S. 40 through the Uinta Basin was not paved until the Midland Trail was completed to Grand Junction. As soon as that route was completed, civic clubs of Vernal immediately began to promote paving the road through the basin to the Colorado state line. A race was instituted to see which state would complete its work first—Colorado or Utah. U.S. 40 was already paved from coast to coast with the exception of eastern Utah and western Colorado; however, Vernal's Main Street, which was a part of the highway, was paved as early at 1899.[34] A hundred cars drove into Salt Lake City in a caravan,

driving up and down the main streets and around the state capitol blowing horns. This demonstration, along with other pressure applied by Uinta Basin businessmen, finally prompted the state highway commission to finish the paving.[35]

Governor Henry M. Blood spoke at the Uinta Basin Industrial Convention in 1933 and promised that the road would be paved from Myton to the Colorado line the following summer—a distance of seventy-five miles. The first narrow bridge over the Green River at Jensen had been built in 1911 and would not carry the traffic anticipated on this new coast-to-coast highway, so a new bridge was built; it was dedicated on Armistice Day, 11 November 1933. The Victory Highway was paved from Vernal east and connected with Colorado at the state line in 1938; however, it was oil-surfaced not rock asphalt as previously planned. Colorado had already completed paving their portion of the highway in 1937, winning the race. On 3 July 1938 a celebration was held on Berthoud Pass commemorating the completion of Highway 40. There was, however, a portion of Utah through Fruitland east of Vernal which was not completed until 1940.

Several highways traversed Utah from east to west by the 1920s: Midland Trail through Denver, Grand Junction, Price, Provo, and Salt Lake City; Pikes Peak Highway, which came from Colorado Springs to Rifle, then north to Vernal, and through the Uinta Basin to Salt Lake City, Ogden, and on to Reno and San Francisco; Lincoln Highway through Rock Springs, Green River, and Evanston, Wyoming, to Salt Lake City; and Victory Highway crossing through Denver, Vernal, and Salt Lake City on its route through the central part of the United States. Vernal had access to the Midland Trail by traveling to Price, and in 1923 Grand Junction opened a dirt road to Rangely over Douglas Pass. The trip over this dirt road from Vernal to Grand Junction, which took "only" eight hours, completed another link to the Midland Trail. In 1927, when a highway was built from Vernal over the mountains north to Manila, it established a direct connection between the Victory Highway and the Lincoln Highway. This connected Dinosaur National Monument to Yellowstone National Park. It also connected the Uinta Basin with many roads in northern Utah and in Wyoming.

Before 1927 a family trip to Manila from Vernal took about three

days. A wagon carried the family up over Taylor Mountain on the Carter Military Road and the first night a camp was made at Trout Creek Park. The second day the family crossed the summit of the Uinta Mountains at Summit Park, descended Young Springs dugway, crossed Carter Creek, and probably camped for the night in Sheep Creek Park. The third-day route twisted down the mountain on the Carter dugway and on to Manila or Green River, Wyoming. When the Vernal-Manila highway was built, it took a new route up over Brush Creek Mountain. The dirt road was designated as Utah 44, and at twenty-five miles an hour this trip would take three hours rather than three days.[36] The U 44 Vernal-Manila highway over Dowd Mountain was completed and dedicated on 21 August 1971. Travel from Vernal to Manila takes about seventy minutes.

When construction commenced on Flaming Gorge dam, Wyoming residents wanted a road from Rock Springs to Dutch John so they could capitalize on the increased tourism to the area. They began a road out of Rock Springs in 1962 and completed it in segments as money became available. They completed the paved road to the state line in 1978. Two years later Utah completed its portion of the highway. On 6 February 1981 this highway from Rock Springs to Vernal was designated U. S. Highway 191. The portion from the Flaming Gorge turnoff to Manila remained as Utah 44.

During the early 1990s, plans were discussed to open a new "Seep Creek Road" from Vernal to extend U.S. Highway 191 south through the Book Cliffs to Interstate 70 at Crescent Junction where present U.S. Highway 191 continues south to Moab, Arches and Canyonlands national parks, and Monument Valley. Uintah County strongly supported the construction of this road; however, Grand County's withdrawal from the proposed project brought plans to a halt.

Early roads also were built to cattle ranges and ranches, including the ranches on Blue Mountain, Diamond Mountain, and Brush Creek Mountain, and to forests, hunting grounds, Gilsonite mines, and sawmills. A paved road was built from Dinosaur National Monument headquarters in Dinosaur, Colorado, across Blue Mountain, crossing the old road over Blue Mountain which went east and west, to the Chew dugway going down into Yampa Canyon. The plan was eventually to connect this park road to the dinosaur quarry

down through Cub Creek, a distance of thirteen miles. Blue Mountain road boosters are still fighting for this connection.

Telegraph and Telephone

The first technological communication with the outside world was made possible when the government moved Fort Thornburgh from Ouray to Ashley Valley and built a telegraph line from Fort Thornburgh to Fort Bridger in the summer of 1882. Nearly one hundred miles of copper wire were used in the installation. The route followed the Fort Thornburgh-Carter road. Following permanent abandonment of Fort Thornburgh in 1883, the line was dismantled and sold at a public auction for forty-nine dollars. In 1884 the buyer tore down both the poles and the copper wire and used them for fences.[37]

With the establishment of Fort Duchesne in 1886, the army built a telegraph line from that fort to the railroad at Price. In 1901 a line was connected from Fort Duchesne to Dragon. People heard a rumor that the Price telegraph route was being discontinued, and A. D. Ferron came in from Price with a petition signed by nearly everyone along the line asking the War Department not to remove the telegraph line.

In 1893 the Vernal and Fort Duchesne Telephone Company was organized to provide telephone service between the fort and Vernal. The telephone line was completed and equipment installed by early March 1894. Communication from Vernal with the outside world was possible with a telephone call to Fort Duchesne, where the message was then sent by telegraph. The first person to use this system was Joseph Pieronett, who sent a message to his wife in Salt Lake City. It took twenty-eight minutes to send the message and the answer was received in one hour and twenty-five minutes. The telephone was first placed in the Vernal post office and then moved in 1899 to S.D. Colton & Company store. It was moved again to Mease's store building and then to George A. Lowe's hardware store in 1902. Early telephone service was not always satisfactory, and in cases of sickness or emergencies it often was necessary to send messengers when the telephone system failed.

The telegraph station was discontinued at Fort Duchesne and

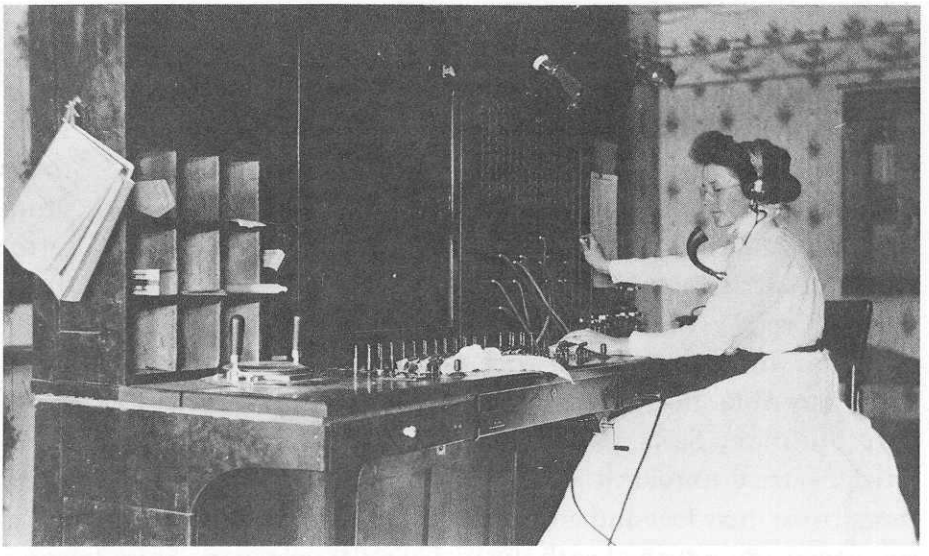
relocated in Vernal. The Uintah Railway had a single-circuit grounded wire from Fruita and Mack, Colorado, to Dragon, Utah, in 1903–1904. Telegraph and telephone service was extended to Vernal on the same system; the project was completed on 20 June 1905. Lynn Ashton was the first local operator and had the equipment upstairs in the old co-op building which later became the J.C. Penney store. Uintah Railroad Company moved the exchange to the Uintah Railway building in the fall of 1905. Mr. and Mrs. J.Q. Logan were employed to operate the line, arriving in Vernal that same year. The couple continued in this work until their deaths.

A branch line was built from Bonanza to Fort Duchesne in 1905. At first the wire was put on poles; but they were replaced with pipes because freighters and Indians would chop the poles down for firewood. The Department of the Interior had a private telephone system from Fort Duchesne, with lines to Ouray, Randlett, and Whiterocks. The old line was taken down and dismantled in 1939.

At the beginning of 1907 steps were taken for the Uintah Bell Telephone Company to construct a telephone line from Vernal to Soldier Summit where it would connect with the line of the Rocky Mountain Bell Telephone Company. The estimated cost of the 115-mile line was $24,000. The telephone line from Vernal to Theodore (Duchesne) required 44,000 pounds of wire. By September telephone lines were operating between Vernal and Jensen.[38]

By the end of 1907 telephone service was available over a line stretching from Salt Lake City through Myton, Roosevelt, Fort Duchesne, and Vernal. Also in 1907 a line was installed from Vernal to Price by way of Fort Duchesne, Roosevelt, Myton, and Theodore over Nine Mile Canyon. This was used until 1918 when another extension was made over Wolf Creek Pass to Park City.[39]

Telephone service expanded fast. The first Uintah telephone directory printed in 1909 listed only eighteen names; a year later the new directory contained 250 names. In addition to the main line through the Uinta Basin, two forest-service lines were constructed in 1911 and 1912. The first, from Spring Creek (north of Vernal) to Moon Lake, was the only telephone line in the Whiterocks area and was greatly relied on by local people. The second was built by way of Dry Fork to the ranger station near Lake Fork.



Telephone operator, Louie Atwood at switchboard in 1910–11. (UCLRHC, C. J. Neal collection)

The Uintah Telephone Company sold its holdings to Mountain States Telephone Company in 1933. During its twenty-six year history, the company had provided telephone access to all settlements in the county while greatly improving its system. After the breakup of AT&T in 1981 and the Bell System in 1983, US West became the provider for Utah. Telephone services are improving continually. In 1992 US West invested $2.5 million to replace existing telephone switching equipment serving Vernal with a state-of-the-art digital system.

Stagecoaches and Mail Service

When Ashley Valley was first settled, there was no mail service. People traveling out of the valley often took letters to be mailed. If a friend or relative heard of someone traveling to Uinta Basin they might send a letter with them. In 1877 Alfred Harvey Westover, using a cart made from the back wheels of a wagon, made a trip to Rock Springs, Wyoming, to obtain flour for the local settlers. He took the settlers' mail with him and after that began carrying mail over the mountains between Ashley Valley and Rock Springs, for which he was paid twenty-five cents a letter.

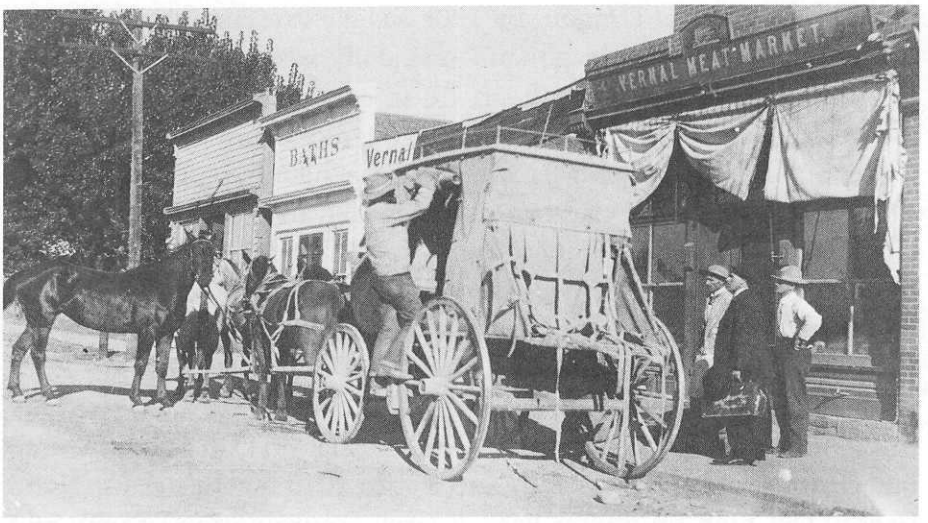
The original post office in Brown's Park, Utah, was established on 14 February 1881. It was located near the old relay station of the Pony Express on the Jarvie Ranch near Bridgeport at the western end of the park, with John Jarvie, Sr., serving as postmaster.

The first post office in Ashley Valley was established on 27 December 1878 and located in the town of Ashley; Wilbur Carlton Britt was the first postmaster.[40] During the winter of 1879, Otto Peterson carried the mail on snowshoes over Taylor Mountain from Green River, Wyoming. He was not a paid mail carrier and settlers gave him produce for his service.[41] During the month of December 1879, a terrible snow storm closed all the roads. Five different men—Pete Dillman, Sam Miller, Frank Catte, Dan Beard, and John Snyder—tried to make the trip to Brown's Hole for the mail; two of them froze their feet and almost lost their lives. Peter Dillman finally succeeded and returned with the mail. Settlers persuaded him to continue to carry the mail all winter. Once a week he brought the mail in from Green River City through Brown's Hole, crossing the mountains on horseback or snowshoes.[42] Ira Burton, Ed Carroll, John Glines, and Henry Coleman also carried the mail across the mountain during the 1880s. On 8 June 1887 the post office at Brown's Park was discontinued and no mail came into Ashley Valley over that route again.[43]

Joseph O.B. Eaton carried the mail from Vernal to Fort Thornburgh using a mule team. Later, when Fort Duchesne was established, he carried the mail to the fort three times a week. Eaton was also the government butcher of hogs and beef at Fort Duchesne.[44] Hyrum Oscar Crandall also ran a mail route with stations at Myton and Fort Duchesne.[45]

The first post office in Vernal was established on 10 June 1886 in the Blythe and Mitchell store located on the corner where the Bank of Vernal was later built. Thomas M. Mitchell was the first postmaster.

Despite the many challenges of traveling on the early Nine Mile Canyon road, regular mail service was provided and increased through 1890. In 1888 the mail came in on the Price stagecoach twice a week. The Fort Duchesne and Price Stage Company left Price on Mondays and Thursdays at 6 A.M., departing Vernal on Tuesdays and Fridays at 2 A.M. The stage line announced that commencing 2



Stagecoach loading on Vernal Main street. (UCLRHC collection)

January 1889 service would increase to a "daily" basis, leaving the fort on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, with return trips on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.[46]

In 1892 mail service was extended to Meeker, Colorado, and beginning 1 July 1893 Lou Woodward had the mail contract for several years from Vernal to Rangely, Colorado. Mail service continued to improve after 1894, when the mail left Price at 8 A.M. and arrived in Vernal thirty-five hours later.[47]

In 1903 the passenger fare from Vernal to Price on the stage was ten dollars and the round trip was sixteen dollars. It cost three dollars from Vernal to Fort Duchesne or five dollars for a round trip. The fare was four dollars to the Duchesne Bridge or six dollars for a round trip. Anywhere between the above locations was charged at ten cents a mile. Four horses were used on the coaches and six changes were made between Vernal and Price. Dinner was served on the Strip, with the stage reaching Smith-Wells in Nine Mile Canyon at six in the evening for an overnight stay.[48]

When the Uintah Railway Company completed its rail line to Dragon in the fall of 1904, the railroad secured a United States mail contract to serve the Vernal and Fort Duchesne areas. Freight and stage services were also provided. Freight service took three days

between Vernal and Dragon. By 1906 a stage carrying mail and passengers left Vernal for Dragon at 7 A.M. daily, while another departed Fort Duchesne for Dragon an hour earlier. Passengers stayed overnight at the Uintah Railway Hotel in Dragon and left at seven the following morning for Mack, with arrival scheduled for noon.[49]

With the mail-service contract awarded to the Uintah Railway Company, mail service between Price and Vernal was discontinued between 1905 and 1910. The Uintah Railway found plenty of challenges in providing mail service. In 1907 heavy snow fell in the Book Cliff Mountains, causing a blockade on the Uintah Railway at Baxter Pass; the mail was unable to come through. The winter of 1908–1909 hit the little railway with greater than normal fury. In 1909 the mail had not arrived for a week due to a snowdrift two miles long and twenty feet high on Baxter Pass. A large accumulation of mail and passengers piled up at Mack and Dragon. Residents of the valley wondered why railroad officials could not transfer the mail from one end of the snow blockade to the other on snow shoes so the mail would not be delayed. Still more problems came in the spring when ice breaking up on the Green River took out the Ouray ferryboat, but the bridge over the White River remained intact. When asked where the ferryboat was, a spokesman for the railway replied that he thought most likely it was nearing the Gulf of California, as they had not heard from it.[50] A terrific storm also hit the area in January 1910 delaying forty-two sacks of Vernal mail.

In May 1910 the railroad announced that automobiles would be brought in on a trial basis to haul passengers, mail, freight, and express between Dragon and Vernal. The railroad was willing to replace the horse-drawn stages and freight wagons with automobiles provided the people of the valley would put up half the expense to build a good automobile road in the valley. On 26 May 1910 the first of the autos rolled into Vernal with a load of mail and some passengers. Its arrival was witnessed by a crowd of local businessmen, and later that afternoon the express truck arrived from Dragon.

Duchesne area residents were not pleased with the mail service provided by the Uintah Railway and urged support from Vernal area residents for the reestablishment of a Vernal-Price route through Nine Mile Canyon. Postal officials finally agreed, and on 1 July 1910 a

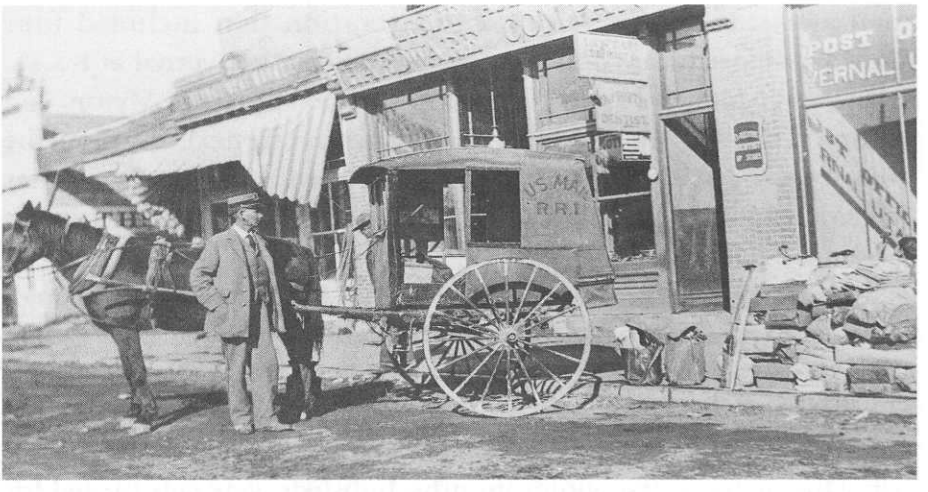
mail and stage line was put into operation that included four Concord stagecoaches and sixty horses. A stage left Vernal at 8 A.M., stopped at Moffat (Gusher) for lunch, changed horses at Myton, and spent the night at Wells in Nine Mile Canyon. The next morning, the stage continued through the canyon with a lunch stop at Soldier Station and change of horses at A.J. Lee's, arriving in Price that evening.

Beginning 1 December 1912 the Vernal-Price mail route through Nine Mile was discontinued and the Vernal-Colton route over Indian Canyon was established. The stage going from Vernal to Colton left at 8 A.M. and arrived in Colton at 3 p.m. the next day—a 112-mile trip. The fare was twelve dollars one way or twenty-two dollars round trip. During the worst winter months, bobsleds were substituted for coaches due to the deep snow.

In 1914 the Intermountain Stage Line and Transportation Company began automobile passenger service between Vernal and Craig, Colorado. It ran three times a week, and the cost of a trip from Vernal to Denver was thirty-six dollars for a round trip. Passenger service was also provided by the Salt Lake and Vernal Stage Line, which by 1934 offered daily service leaving Vernal at 7 A.M. and arriving in Salt Lake City at noon, with the return trip leaving Salt Lake at 3:15 P.M. and arriving in Vernal at 8 P.M. In 1915 the mail for Brown's Park began coming to Vernal rather than through Craig, and a regular carrier was appointed to carry it on from Vernal to the park.[51]

Mail packages sent to the Vernal post office included diverse items such as groceries, blacksmith tools, automobile parts, hardware, nails, pitchforks, brooms, water hydrants, fresh strawberries and cherries, fruit jars, tires, and feather beds. Acorn Mercantile shipped out 12,000 eggs to Grand Junction and Salt Lake City every week. Practically all the parcel post moving into the eastern part of the Uinta Basin was hauled by the Uintah Railway Company. By April 1916 this had amounted to 728,000 pounds during the previous six months. In addition, the company transported about 40,000 pounds of regular mail in that period.

The Duchesne Stage & Transportation Company had the contract for the mail and parcel post from Helper to the basin and hauled approximately 787,000 pounds of parcel post plus about

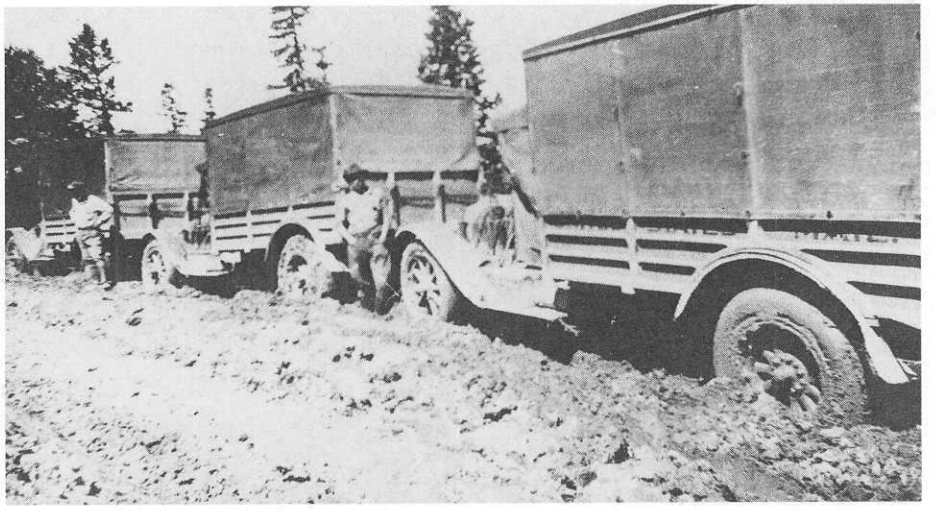


Dicky Jensen, Rural Route One mailman, delivers mail in 1913. (UCLRHC, C. J. Neal collection)

60,000 pounds of mail during a six-month period in 1916.[52] This great deluge of parcel post might have continued for years had it not have been for the thirty-five tons of brick ordered for the Bank of Vernal in 1916. The post office department took action in November: instructions were sent out to postmasters permitting no more than 200 pounds of parcel-post mail to be accepted for any one addressee on the same day, effectively putting a stop to shipments of cement, flour, and brick.

In the late winter of 1918–19 the post office department did not renew its contract for hauling the mail between Watson and Vernal but took over delivery service itself. Tons of mail had backed up during the severe winter, but, using a few surplus war department trucks, the postal service succeeded in delivering the mail. It reestablished a reliable service between Price and the thirty-five post offices in the Uinta Basin.

In 1920 mail came to Ashley Valley from Helper, Utah, a distance of 120 miles, by government-owned motor trucks, with special cars used for first-class mail and perishable goods. Thirteen tons of mail per day was not an uncommon amount during this period when all mail for the Uintah Reservation points was handled through the Vernal office. With the post office taking over the service, a savings of



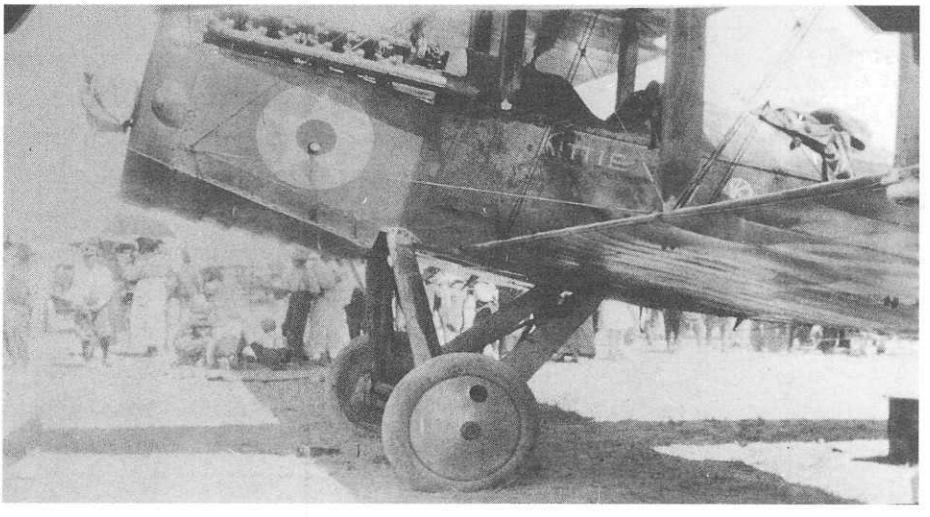
U.S. Mail trucks fight mud to deliver mail from Price to Vernal. (UCLRHC collection)

$3,000 to $4,000 a month was made over the cost of mail delivery let out on private contracts by the government.

In 1903 the Vernal post office was located in a small wooden building on the north side of Main Street. The post office was moved to a temporary place on South Vernal Avenue until the new bank and post office could be built on that site.[53] In 1923 it moved to the new Federal Building at 100 West Main, remaining at that location until 1986. One hundred years after the first Vernal post office opened in 1886, the doors swung open to a large new post office at 67 North 800 West on 6 September 1986. The postmaster was John Evan Jones, with sixteen part-time helpers and twenty-four full-time employees, with six on city and rural routes and two on star routes. These individuals currently handle mail delivery to some 9,500 homes and businesses, including service to 2,430 post office boxes. Vernal's mail carriers travel about 111,000 miles a year in all kinds of weather, delivering more than 9.8 million pieces of mail.[54]

Air Transportation and Airmail

Within half a century, mail service to Uintah County progressed from men trudging across the mountains on snowshoes to the arrival of air-mail service in 1929. The first recorded airplane landing in



First recorded airplane to land in Uintah County in 1920. (UCLRHC collection)

Uintah County took place in the summer of 1920 when E. R. Winston, cashier of the First National Bank of Myton, arranged for a plane to land at Bennion's pasture; nearly one hundred Vernal residents then took rides in the airplane. By 1927 plans were discussed to provide airline passenger and mail service between Salt Lake City and Vernal. Those plans became a reality when the Intermountain Flying Company of Price in cooperation with Union Pacific Airways of Ogden started daily round-trip service with a six-passenger Travelair monoplane on 29 September 1929. The first trip from Vernal to Salt Lake City took seventy-nine minutes, while the return trip was made in seventy-six minutes. A 660-by-2,640-foot landing strip was established in a field owned by Ed Winder near the center of Vernal.

In 1939 a strip of land was cleared on the Upper Burns Bench northeast of Vernal for emergency landings; however, it was not kept in good repair and weeds and sagebrush soon reclaimed the land.[55] Other fields also were used for landing aircraft. On 19 June 1941 two women flying to Denver were forced to make an emergency landing in a pasture owned by Al Hatch. After refueling, an attempt to take off failed when the propeller struck a wire fence and the plane nosed over. The women climbed out unhurt and, after repairing the plane,

took off successfully. It was apparent that Vernal needed more adequate facilities.[56]

One week later, when an Army bomber from Salt Lake crashed north of Vernal killing all aboard, Vernal officials were convinced an airstrip was needed. The next week county engineer Leon P. Christensen surveyed and marked the strip on the Bench and Ross Merrill removed the weeds and leveled the runway with the county grader. This ground was hard, with no obstructions such as fences and trees, making it ideal except for its location seven miles out of town. Members of the Vernal Aviation Club purchased a Piper Cub airplane and built a hangar. The Bench airport was used for several years.

Land for the present Vernal airport was acquired from Van Massey and Albert Hodgkinson in August 1944, and the airport was completed in June 1945 at a cost of $9,375. A year and a half later the airport was upgraded to handle commercial aircraft. Subsequent improvements have included paving and lighting the two-mile-long runways and construction of hangars, offices, a pilot lounge, and other facilities.

The Vernal Aviation Club had been organized in the early 1940s with nine original members. The Uintah Air Scouts Squadron was established in February 1944 with more than twenty members, and the organization of a local Civilian Air Patrol (CAP) squadron when 200 interested persons attended a mass meeting in April 1944 brought strong support for a new airport. The previous year twenty-seven students enrolled in an airplane mechanics class authorized by the Uintah Board of Education and taught by Charles T. Freeman. A ladies class, with thirty-eight women, was also taught. Flying lessons were offered through the CAP, whose main purpose was to patrol forest and grazing areas during the fire-hazard seasons and to help locate downed aircraft. Members were provided uniforms but worked on a volunteer basis. The state CAP provided the Vernal squadron with three planes for training and patrol purposes. Today Vernal and Roosevelt share one CAP plane.

Some pilots, including Jack C. Turner, Otis A. Kounalis, and Chuck Ridling, offered private flying lessons, and both men and women worked to earn pilot licenses. By December 1944 several local

women had soloed and four—Isla King, Ada Jensen, Polly Hazelbush and Cora Winkler—went on to earn pilot licenses. Most took airplane mechanics from Charles Freeman at the high school as the old planes were not always in good condition and the women needed to know how to fix them in emergencies. Fourteen men had soloed at this time. Out of this group of flyers a few belonged to an elite club, "The Sagebrush Club." To qualify a flyer must have set a plane down with a couple of rabbit-like hops through the sagebrush.[57]

Mishaps were always a possibility. Don Barr hit a donkey upon making a solo landing, causing the plane to flip over. Duff Swain's most memorable flight occurred when he flew Gail Morey out to work on ranch houses he was building for Golden and Abe Hatch at Willow Creek. Swain had made the trip many times without any trouble; however, on take-off from the Hatch pasture, he failed to take into consideration the extra weight of his passenger and instead of clearing an irrigation ditch that ran through the middle of the pasture, Swain hit the ditch, nearly crashing as the plane skimmed just above the sagebrush with its right landing gear broken off and hanging six feet down on the end of the brake cable, "like a dead rooster."

Swain decided to fly to Vernal, thinking that if he crash-landed he would be better off in town. When they reached town, he buzzed Main Street and some of his flying buddies who worked in stores ran out and saw the problem. They jumped in their cars and headed for the airport. Swain wrote a note, put it in his folding ruler and dropped it. The note simply said, "Bring a fire extinguisher to put out the fire. We will be fine and are not scared, don't worry." The airstrip was then just a pasture. Swain set the plane down like a bicycle on one wheel. He did a 180-degree turn and stopped. The propeller had dug two inches into the ground. The repairs to the plane cost only forty-seven dollars, and soon he was ready to go again.[58]

These early planes had few instruments and no radios. If these did not work, you "flew by the seat of your pants." Pilots would joke and say, "We're on instruments, take out your watch." If someone had to come in after dark, the other pilots and friends drove cars to the airstrip and lined both sides with car lights on, so the pilot would know where to land.[59]

In February 1945 Fran Feltch, Stan King, and Jack Turner orga-

nized the Basin Flying Service. Later that same year Turner took over the company and operated three light aircraft. The Uintah School District had one aircraft. From this point on aviation in Vernal continually progressed. Hangars were built, offices, pilot lounge, club room, and a caretaker residence were added to Basin Flying Service operations. Many students took advantage of the instruction and rentals. Gib Bennett joined Jack Turner to run a charter service. By 1948 at least forty county residents had private pilot licenses.

In 1948, in a move to bring a commercial airline to Vernal, Hugh Colton and Fran Feltch traveled to Casper, Wyoming, and appeared before the Civil Aeronautics Board to present Vernal's case for an airline. Challenger Airlines was seeking a permit at the time from the federal organization to make stops in Vernal and Casper. Colton and Feltch worked with Challenger and their efforts eventually paid off—Challenger made its inaugural flight from Vernal on 1 July 1949.[60]

Later that year Frontier Airlines took over the commercial flights, and in 1954 the company recorded its 10,000th flight into Vernal during the celebration and dedication of its new administration building.[61] Sky West took over the commercial flights from Frontier in March 1982. A new municipal airport terminal was begun on 18 July 1985 at a projected cost of $246,102. The building was completed at the end of January 1986.[62] Other small commuter air services have also served the area in the past.

The history of Uintah County's economic development is interwoven with that of the transportation industry. The county's distance from railroads and population centers necessitated the early development of the freighting industry to bring in needed supplies and to ship out the products being raised and produced in the valley. Today Uintah County is an integrated part of the outside world and its transportation and communication needs are constantly changing. Plans for expanding the airport at the present location or building elsewhere are under discussion. Roads are constantly being widened and upgraded. Computer technology is adding another dimension to communication through the Internet, and fax machines and expanded and improved telephone, radio, and TV services are enjoyed by county residents.

ENDNOTES

1. See *Vernal Express*, 25 October 1973.

2. *Report of the Secretary of the Interior: Indian Affairs*, 42nd Cong., 2nd sess., 1871–72, Serial 1505, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1872), III, 960–66. See also Donald M. Batty "A History of Early Roads and Freighting in the Eastern Uinta Basin, 1872-1920," M.S. thesis, Utah State University, 1970, 11.

3. Batty, "A History of Early Roads and Freighting," 17.

4. Ibid.

5. A.R. Standing, "Through the Uintas: History of the Carter Road," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 35 (Summer 1967): 257.

6. Doris Karren Burton, *Blue Mountain Folks* (Salt Lake City: K/P Graphics, 1987), 224.

7. Gary Lee Walker, "History of Fort Duchesne," Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1992, 91–93.

8. Captain R.B. Marcy was dispatched by Colonel Albert Sidney Johnston from Fort Bridger on 27 November 1857 to Taos, New Mexico, to obtain meat and draft animals to replace those lost as a result of Mormon resistance to the Utah Expedition.

9. Standing, "Through the Uintas," 260; William A. Carter, "First Federal Road Built to Ashley Valley," *Vernal Express*, Christmas edition 1934.

10. A. Reed Morrill, "A Historical Study of Ashley Valley and Its Environs," Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1937, 196.

11. Batty, "A History of Early Roads," 25.

12. Thomas G. Alexander and Leonard J. Arrington, "The Utah Military Frontier, 1872–1912: Forts Cameron, Thornburgh, and Duchesne," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 32 (Fall 1964): 348.

13. George Alfred Slaugh, "The Autobiography of George A. Slaugh," in *Legacy: The Story of George Alfred Slaugh and Rachel Maria Goodrich, Their Children, and Their Children's Children* (Salt Lake City: Gladys Slaugh Jacobson, 1964), 6.

14. Tom Reece, telephone interview with author, 21 April 1996. See also *Vernal Express*, 14 November 1924, 9 November 1939, 26 September 1940, 26 December 1963, and 21 December 1967.

15. Henry Flack, "Fort Duchesne Beginnings," in Daughters of Utah Pioneers of Uintah County, comp., *Builders of Uintah* (Springville, Art City Publishers, 1947), 187–88.

16. Philip F. Notarianni, *Carbon County: Eastern Utah's Industrialized Island* (Salt Lake City: Utah Historical Society, 1981), 139.

17. Batty, "A History of Early Roads," 44. Ivan Batty commenced driving a freight team when he was fourteen years old.

18. *Vernal Express*, 27 March 1914 and 24 March 1916.

19. Dee Jenkins, telephone interview with Doris Burton, 1995.

20. Batty, "A History of Early Roads," 59.

21. *Vernal Express*, 27 October 1948.

22. Ibid., 21 May, 28 May, and 11 June 1896.

23. Ibid., 11 June 1896.

24. Dick and Vivian Dunham, *Flaming Gorge Country* (Denver: Eastwood Printing and Publishing Company, 1977), 199.

25. Newell C. Remington, "A History of the Gilsonite Industry," Ph.D. diss., University of Utah, 1959, 236–45; Batty, "A History of Early Roads," 35; Harold Workman, interview with author, 12 July 1993.

26. Workman, interview.

27. Henry E. Bender, Jr., *Uintah Railway: The Gilsonite Route* (Berkeley: Howell-North Books, 1970), 57.

28. *Builders of Uintah*, 266–68.

29. *Vernal Express*, 25 November 1927.

30. Andrew J. Vernon' s family history states that Charlie (Lectric) Johnson brought the first car to Vernal; most reports name John W. Pope, however.

31. See Loosle, "The Ashley National Forest.," UCL Regional History Center.

32. *Vernal Express*, 10 June 1921; J. William Workman, "The Twist," *Vernal Express*, 24 October 1946.

33. Virginia Rishel, *Wheels to Adventure: Bill Rishel's Western Routes* (Salt Lake City: Howe Brothers, 1983), 81–100.

34. *Vernal Express*, 7 October 1899.

35. Rishel, *Wheels to Adventure*, 100.

36. J.O. Stewart, "Driving From Vernal to Green River Over Utah's Scenic Mountain Road," *Vernal Express* (date unknown), copy in Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

37. Walker, "A History of Fort Duchesne," 90.

38. *Vernal Express*, 8 June, 6 September, 20 September, 18 October, and 22 November 1907; Bert Jenson, *Outlaw Trail History Journal*, (Vernal, UT: Outlaw Trail History Center, 1993),40–50.

39. This was put in by the Uintah Telephone Company with Charles J. Neal as manager. The line over Wolf Creek Pass was constructed by Neal with only young boys to help him.

40. John S. Gallagher, *The Post Offices of Utah* (Clarksburg, MD: The Depot, 1977), 57.

41. "Ashley Valley's First Post Office," booklet printed by the Uintah County Daughters of the Pioneers, Vernal, n.d.,copy in UCL Regional History Center.

42. *Vernal Express*, 31 August 1949; Morrill, *A Historical Study of Uintah Basin*, 99.

43. "Ashley Valley's First Post Office."

44. Walker, "History of Fort Duchesne," 190.

45. *Builders of Uintah*, 24.

46. Post Returns for Fort Duchesne, October-December 1888, microfilm UA 26 A 255, roll 333, UCL Regional History Center; Walker, "A History of Fort Duchesne," 209.

47. *Vernal Express*, 7 June 1894.

48. Ibid., 14 February 1903.

49. Bender, *Uintah Railway*, 57.

50. *Vernal Express*, 2 April 1909.

51. Ibid., 18 June 1915.

52. Bender, *Uintah Railway*, 115.

53. *Vernal Express*, 23 May 1903; Al Johnston had a six-pulley tackle, and one horse did all the pulling to move the post office.

54. Ibid., 12 September 1986.

55. Ibid., 26 June 1941.

56. Ibid., 19 June 1941.

57. Ibid., 14 December 1944; *Vernal Express* 7 September 1944; personal interview with Isla King by author on 12 September, 1993.

58. Isla King, interview.

59. Ibid.

60. *Vernal Express*, 6 October, 15 December 1948, and 29 June 1949.

61. Ibid., 1 July and 24 July 1954.

62. Ibid., 22 January 1986.

9

Prayer Rock to Temple

RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS

The organization of the first church in the Ashley Valley took place in January 1878. Thomas Bingham, a Mormon polygamist who had arrived in 1877, was chosen to preside over the little colony of LDS members called by President John Taylor to settle Ashley Valley. In 1878 Bingham reported to church officials that a hundred Mormons had settled in the valley and advised that a church organization should be formed. His request was granted, and the organizational meeting was held near the Green River. The members were placed under the jurisdiction of the Wasatch Stake, with headquarters in Heber City. On 1 June 1879 three districts were formed and presidents selected: Mountain Dell (Dry Fork), Thomas Bingham; Incline (Jensen), Fred G. Williams; and Ashley Center, Jeremiah Hatch.

Church meetings were held in homes until schoolhouses or meetinghouses were built. The arrival of additional Mormons in the Uinta Basin led to the organization on 11 September 1881 of Ashley Center and Mountain Dell into wards; the former district presidents became bishops.

Included among the new arrivals were a number of polygamists seeking to evade arrest by federal officials for violation of anti-polygamy laws. Federal marshals followed polygamists into the Uinta Basin, and while some including Thomas Bingham, Jr., and Frank Hadlock were arrested and sent to the territorial prison in Salt Lake City; others like John Lambert managed to escape arrest by hiding under an overturned wagon bed, and then spent the winter concealed in the middle of a haystack with a hole cut down from the top.

Polygamist visitors were also threatened with arrest, perhaps the most prominent of whom was Wilford Woodruff, who became president of the LDS church in 1887. In June and July 1886 he visited his son Henry and Nellie Woodruff in Ashley Valley seeking refuge from federal agents. He spent over a month in the area, making several fishing trips into the mountains. Although a church conference was held during the time he was in the area, he did not attend, knowing that agents might be watching. He spent several different days and nights at the home of Bishop Harvey J. Glines. The story is told by Thomas Bingham that Woodruff felt very cooped up, so he was dressed up in a long dress and sun bonnet and went out to hoe the orchard. He was dubbed "Aunt Matilda" and twice had close calls with federal agents. One rode into the yard and called to "Aunt Matilda" in the garden, asking for her husband. Woodruff pointed down the road to the beehives, and the agent rode on. The second time a marshal was riding toward the orchard, but Woodruff was saved when James Glines's father came up behind the marshal in his buggy. The marshal told Glines he was going to the orchard to talk to the lady. Glines advised the marshal against the idea, stating her husband was very jealous and a straight shooter.

At nine o'clock on the night of 22 July Woodruff made a hasty escape. James Glines hitched his race horses to a spring wagon and Woodruff was whisked out of the valley. Bingham stated that an agent stopped the wagon on the bridge, but Glines reported his wife was sick and he was taking her to a doctor. The agent peaked inside the blanket and saw the sunbonneted figure curled up in blankets. A prearranged emergency signal of a gunshot followed, with men in the lower valley joining in the shooting and a haystack lit on fire.While everyone else raced to the fire, Woodruff escaped out of the valley,

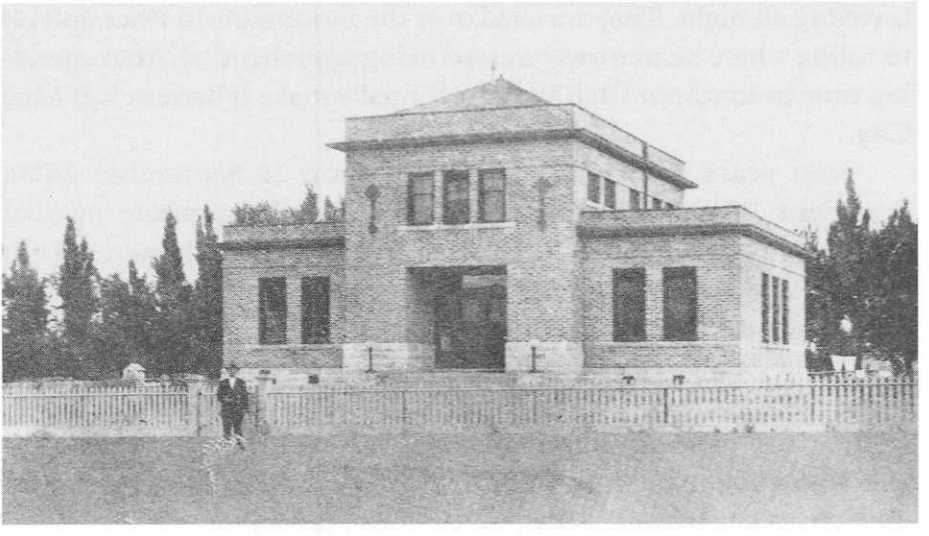
traveling all night. They traveled over the mountains to Price and on to Salina where he narrowly missed being apprehended. After spending time in southern Utah Woodruff finally make it back to Salt Lake City.[1]

Four years after his stay in Vernal, on 25 September 1890, President Wilford Woodruff helped end the crusade against polygamy by issuing the "Manifesto" advising church members to abide by the law and not enter into polygamous marriages. The decision resulted in many hardships and heartaches for plural wives in Uintah County. One of the stated religious motives for plural marriage was to increase the Mormon population and to absorb surplus women into marriage to provide care for them.[2] Polygamy did provide a population boost to Uintah County and many prominent families have roots to these early polygamous marriages.

Tensions between Mormons and non-Mormons grew as a large number of Mormons settled on the Bench (Vernal) during the 1880s. The gentiles (non-Mormons) had previously settled on Ashley Creek and formed the town of Ashley. Tension grew more intense in 1893 to have the county seat relocated from the town of Ashley to Vernal. Mormon voters prevailed and the location was changed.

In 1883 Mill Ward (Maeser) was formed with William Shaffer as acting bishop. This ward was more formally organized on 9 May 1887 and Shaffer was ordained as bishop. On 15 September 1884 Mormon church membership had grown sufficiently to divide Ashley Center Ward and form two new districts—Merrill (Naples) and Glines, with George A. Davis and James H. Glines as acting bishops.

The first decade of Mormon settlement in the valley saw an influx of Mormon settlers, during which time the Latter-day Saints were part of Wasatch Stake, with Abraham Hatch as president. By 11 July 1886 plans were launched to create the Uintah Stake, which was officially established on 9 May 1887 by apostles John Henry Smith and John W. Taylor. The new stake presidency included Samuel R. Bennion, president, with Reuben S. Collett and James Hacking as counselors. The new stake boundaries stretched from the Utah-Colorado boundary west to the summit of the drainage of the Uinta and Duchesne rivers; it included six wards.[3] With the formation of Uintah Stake, a stake center was erected in Vernal at about 56 West



The Mormon Stake Office building in Vernal which is no longer standing. (UCLRHC collection, Trim photo)

Main. Ashley Center Ward also met in this white frame building. Prior to this, a log schoolhouse/meetinghouse just east of this new building had been used.

The original stake consisted of the following wards: Ashley Center (Vernal), Merrill (Naples), Mill (Maeser), Fourth (Glines), Mountain Dell (Dry Fork), and Riverdale (Jensen), with their respective bishops George Freestone, Thomas J. Caldwell, William Shaffer, Peter Abplanalp, Silas Jerome Merrill, and Nathan Hunting.[4] On 7 November 1886 the first conference of the partially formed Uintah Stake was held in the log schoolhouse at Merrill Ward. At this conference it was announced that "round dances" would be abandoned in this stake of Zion. Other dances were to be allowed in "moderation." In the spring of 1887 Harley Mowry built a small rock tithing office on this same block but around the corner. On 1 January 1909 the fixtures and materials from the rock building were moved into the new stake office building on about 155 South 100 West. On 14 July 1887 a local quorum of Seventies was organized by Abraham H. Cannon at Ashley.

In pursuing the church's commitment to education, a stake board of education was organized 15 September 1888 with the fol-



Uintah Stake Tabernacle dedicated in 1907. (UCLRHC collection)

lowing members: R.S. Collett, C.C. Bartlett, George P. Billings, Phillip Stringham, and Henry A. Woodruff. The Uintah Academy began on 2 November 1891 with Henry Peterson as president.

On 17 December 1893 Ashley Center Ward was renamed Vernal Ward. Riverdale Ward was divided, and Jensen Ward was formed on 7 August 1894 with George P. Billings as bishop.

In 1898, under President Samuel R. Bennion, architects began drawing plans and a building site was chosen for construction of the Uintah Stake Tabernacle. Rock quarries were established and church members began hauling rock in 1899; the groundbreaking was held in March 1900. When the building was brought up to a certain level in 1901, that year was inscribed on the front of the building. Lycurgus Johnson and Waldimer C. Lybbert were in charge of the building project. Construction was a long, tedious job for the Saints; it took seven years to complete the building, which was dedicated by church president Joseph F. Smith on 24 August 1907. William H. Smart had replaced Samuel R. Bennion as Uintah Stake president on 3 June 1906, in time to oversee the completion of the new tabernacle. The building cost $37,058.15—a tremendous amount for the Saints to raise at that time.

The tabernacle was used for more than eighty years as Vernal's primary meetinghouse for large religious assemblies. Community activities also have been held in the tabernacle, including a Utah Symphony performance and many funerals. The tabernacle ceased to be used when it could no longer meet requirements for handicapped access, efficient energy use, and other needs newer facilities met. A "Save the Tabernacle" committee was formed in 1981 to work with church officials on the feasibility of using the building as a community center rather than tearing it down, but no workable plan was developed. Members were overjoyed when it was announced in 1994 that the tabernacle would be turned into a LDS temple, with plans for completion in 1997. President Gordon B. Hinckley spoke at the site dedication on 13 May 1995, with about 12,000 people attending the groundbreaking ceremony.

Mormon church membership in the area continued to grow, and in January 1907 Smart organized the Uintah Colonist Bureau. The purpose of the organization was to obtain information about available lands and promote further settling of these lands by church members. On 29 October1909 Vernal Ward was divided into two wards, with John N. Davis and David Bennion as bishops. Vernal First Ward continued to hold meetings in the little "White Church" on Main Street; Vernal Second Ward met at the Central School until a new chapel was built at 155 South 100 West.

The LDS church women's Relief Society auxiliary organization was established locally on 2 January 1880 with Anna K. Bartlett as president. The first Relief Society had seventeen members. In the early days this organization was instrumental in promoting the health and welfare of the community and aided in homefront activities during World War I. The first Mormon Sunday school was organized in May 1878 with Joseph H. Black as superintendent. A children's Primary organization was formed on 8 May 1887 under the leadership of Abigail Oaks. The Young Women's Mutual Improvement Association was organized 7 November 1886 with Roxanna Remington Iverson as president. The Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association was organized the same day with Phillip Stringham as president.[5]

Although the LDS church is still the predominant faith found in

Uintah County, many other denominations have had a great influence on the county. Other early churches included the Episcopal church, Catholic church, Kingsbury Congregational church, and Presbyterian church. When the oil boom hit Uintah County in 1947, many people of different religions moved into the area and many different churches were organized.

The Episcopal church became active in the Uinta Basin primarily through the efforts of Colonel J.F. Randlett, U. S. Indian agent for the Uncompahgre Reservation. In 1885 he requested that church services be held and that a mission to the Ute Indians be established. Congress concurred in the designation of the Episcopal church as the denomination in charge of education and missionary work among the Utes in Utah. The policy of assigning specific religious groups to certain Indian reservations had been fostered under President U.S. Grant's administration of the 1870s. Land at Leland which had been agency and government school headquarters for the Uncompahgre Reservation was set aside for the church site. Some $2,500 was raised to build a church and mission house. Although the mission house burned in 1937, the church still stands. This quaint little "Holy Spirit Church" was originally nestled against the hills north of Randlett and is one of the oldest churches in the state.

Early in 1894 Archdeacon Frederick W. Crook, on invitation from Colonel Randlett, went to Fort Duchesne by stage and held the first service, which he described as follows:

> On Sunday, a most unique service was held in one of the large rooms. To the left sat a group of colored United States soldiers; in the center were the children of the Indian school, surrounded by bucks and squaws, with little papooses done up in those odd babyspoons, or baskets, clad in every variety, from buckskin to the vari-colored and thin calico, such as contractors only know how to sell. Around the priest were the white employees, with a few people from the Mormon settlement, present at the agency on trade, and attracted by the novelty. Six nationalities were represented.[6]

The white frame building was trimmed in bright red and boasted a huge bell in the yard. A cemetery was located in the churchyard.

The church was built alongside the well-traveled road to Ouray; however, later the new highway through Randlett left the church off the beaten path, so it was moved to a new location across the river to a lot just across the highway from the Randlett community building.

The Reverend George S. Vest from Virginia was the first pastor at the church and was soon joined by Milton J. Hersey, who had worked with Indians in Arizona. Hersey was accompanied by his wife. The couple aided a number of orphaned Indian children and at one time cared for three abandoned Indian babies in their home.[7] Hersey worked at the church until 1922 when he was succeeded by Rev. W. H. Howes. Reverend Howes was an artist, and most of the decorations in the church at the present time were painted by him. Particularly noteworthy is the beautiful painted entrance to the chapel with the words, "The Way of Peace," over the door. In 1937, when the priest's home in Randlett burned, Rev. Howes was moved to Provo. Until 1961 services in Randlett were given by visiting pastors.[8] Reverend Richard Mendez is the present pastor. In 1993 there were 107 baptized members in the church.[9]

Bishop Abiel Leonard established an Indian Mission at Whiterocks for the Uintah Utes in 1893; soon a little chapel was built and several dedicated missionaries were working among the Utes. St. Elizabeth's Episcopal church was officially established at Whiterocks in 1904. The doors were kept open until 1959 when the church was closed for three years; it was then reopened. The Reverend Two-Bulls, a Lakota Indian, was the vicar until 1 October 1995. The church had seventy-four baptized members in 1993.[10]

St. Paul's Episcopal church in Vernal is a small-town parish church located at 226 West Main Street. It was built in 1909 by Andrew Burkley and William Cook. The Reverend O.E. Ostenson arrived in Vernal on 20 September 1900 to begin work which would lead to the building of St. Paul's. Regular services began on 30 September 1900 in Jake Workman's Opera House. Services were moved on 22 October to the Odd Fellows Lodge. Property was purchased to build a new church in Vernal by the Episcopal church for $325 on 27 February 1901, and ground was broken for the church on 26 July 1901. On 20 August Reverend Ostenson, assisted by Indian missionary M.J. Hersey of Randlett, laid the cornerstone for the new

church. With permission of the rector, Miss Anna Forrest named the church St. Paul's, after St. Paul's Church in Washington, D.C.

St. Paul's Lodge was built in 1909; it is a two-story brick building east of St. Paul's Church. The lodge was built by the Girls' Friendly Society of New York as a home for girls who came to Vernal to attend school or to work. It also served as a center for civic activities and club meetings. In 1928 St. Paul's was closed because of inactivity. Four years later the lodge was sold to Uintah County and served for the next several years as a hospital.

St. Paul's was reactivated in January 1947 when Reverend Walter F. Cable was sent to be deacon-in-charge by the bishop of Utah. Two years later, the lodge was repurchased by the church and has since served as the parish house with apartments for the pastor and meeting rooms for the church. The church building itself has continually remained in the hands of the Episcopal church.[11] The church has recently been remodeled and restored under the guidance of Reverend Glen Gleaves. The church had sixty baptized members in 1993 according to the parochial report.

The Kingsbury Congregational church site in Vernal was purchased by John D. Kingsbury, a representative of the Congregational church, in 1903. The church was organized under Kingsbury's direction and a building was completed in 1905 on the east half of the property. The building was dedicated 22 October 1905 and the congregation voted to name the church after its organizer. The congregation began a church school in an office building on Main Street. In 1904 the west side of the Kingsbury Congregational church lot was deeded to the Congregational Education Society, which built the Wilcox Academy. With the construction in 1924 of an accredited public school, the academy closed and ownership of the building reverted to the Kingsbury Congregational church, which remodeled it to meet ecclesiastical needs.

The original building was torn down and was replaced by a modern round church building, which was dedicated in 1962. In 1904 a group of women of the Congregational Ladies Aid Society decided to serve an election day dinner to raise funds for their charitable projects. Chicken pies and desserts were served for their first dinner. The tradition has continued, and today the community still supports the

delicious turkey dinner served. In 1995 the church had approximately sixty members.

The Roman Catholic church began its activities in Uintah County with the periodical visitations of Father Alfred Giovannoni in March 1917. This youthful Italian priest traveled throughout the Uinta Basin monthly from his parish in Price, bringing the teachings of the church to the outlying areas. He drove an old Ford car, and it became necessary on a number of occasions to hitch a team of horses to the machine to help it reach its destination. Giovannoni traveled over these bad country roads for five years, mainly to Duchesne, Roosevelt, and Vernal, but he also visited Myton, LaPoint, and other towns where Catholics resided. Mass was offered whenever possible, often in the homes of local Catholics such as N.J. Meagher and Gus Raemer. Father Giovannoni later became chaplain at St. Mary's of the Wasatch Academy in Salt Lake City.[12]

In 1922 the first resident priest, Father Duane G. Hunt, who later became a bishop of the Salt Lake City diocese, arrived in Vernal. He served not only Vernal but also the adjoining mission. After Bishop Hunt's departure in 1923, several other priests resided in the area for brief periods of time; for a number of years there was no resident priest.

In 1938 the Paulist Order of Oak Ridge, New Jersey, came to the Uinta Basin and established headquarters at Vernal. The superior of this group was Father Robert Murphy, who remained in the area for five years. The Paulist Order is largely a missionary organization, seeking converts in areas where few Catholics are to be found. While in the Uinta Basin, a trailer chapel was used for the celebration of mass. Catholic vacation schools for young people were conducted with the aid of the Sisters of the Holy Cross of Salt Lake City. In 1943 the Paulists moved to Davis County and were replaced by the Benedictine Order of St. John's Abbey, Collegeville, Minnesota. Representing this order in the basin was Father Wendel Luetmer, who settled in Roosevelt and worked with Indians on the reservation at Fort Duchesne and also with Catholics at Myton, Duchesne, and Hanna. Father Blase Schumacher, under whose direction the present church was built, moved to Vernal and worked with Catholics in Vernal, Bonanza, and Jensen.

Before the arrival of Father Schumacher, the chapel consisted of a small house at about 135 South 100 West which the church had acquired from Sarah Mease. Prior to this, masses were held in the Odd Fellows Hall and in the old Commercial Club. The oil boom brought many more Catholics to the area, and Father Schumacher began the process of building the first Catholic church in Vernal. This building, 32 by 64 feet, was built at 138 North 100 West to seat approximately 150 people; much of the construction work was accomplished by the parishioners. It was named after St. James the Greater. On 25 July 1948 the cornerstone was laid. The first service to be held in the upstairs chapel was the Christmas midnight mass in 1949.

Since 1949 eleven fathers have presided over the local congregation. They have included fathers LeMay, Harding, Doyle, Fogarty, Bonnett, Davich, Spellen, Kokal, Baraniewicz, Deptula, and Michael Winterer, the present priest. By 1953 the congregation had 180 members. In 1963 a rectory was built to the north of the church, and a religious education building was constructed in 1973 beyond the rectory. A garden and recreation area called the "Shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary" was created to the east of the church. At present (1995), 278 families (about 1,000 individuals) attend local services.

The Vernal Church of Christ was organized by Otis Gatewood in the early 1940s and is presently located at 2045 West Highway 40. The present building and property were purchased on 22 March 1962. Later Samuel A. Matthews took an interest in the work in Utah while he was in the military service stationed in Utah. He began preaching on a radio station from the military post. He graduated from Brown Trail Preacher Training School in 1991 and moved to Vernal. After his arrival there were six baptisms in 1991, six in 1992, and eight in 1993. Matthews left Vernal in June 1995; presently the church is in the process of securing a new preacher.

Early in the 1950s, before the Uinta Basin was assigned to any particular congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, various Witnesses came to the area to do door-to-door proselyting, offering Bible-based literature. Among the Witnesses who came in the 1950s were Esther Morris, Marie Thomlin, and Bill and Alice Gallegos. Interest was cultivated in the LaPoint area among the LeBaron, Hackford, and Reber

families, and others. The interested people would meet together for Bible study in the LeBaron home. Others were meeting together in Myton on a regular basis at the home of Tessy Thompson. Later the Harris and Searle families began to meet with them.

In about 1958 two families of Jehovah's Witnesses moved to Vernal from California, formed a congregation, and rented a building. However, membership was not large enough to justify the building, so the Vernal group combined with the Witnesses at Roosevelt, remaining there until 1974. In 1978 the Kingdom Hall in Davis was built at 3970 South 2500 East and was enlarged in July 1993. The Jehovah's Witnesses group is currently growing rapidly, with an average of 140 attending regularly.[13]

The Vernal Christian Church began in July 1974 with a Bible study in the home of Mr. and Mrs. A.R. Meek. From the efforts of the Bible study group, the Vernal Christian Church was started with evangelical services on 12 November, continuing through 17 November, in the Kiwanis Scout House. A special charter service on 12 January 1975 was led by Merv Johnson and the Craig church. Twenty-four people became charter members of the Vernal Christian Church. Harry and Helen Darnell donated property to the church in January 1975. Ralph E. Sorter was called to be the first minister of the church on a part-time basis in January 1975, driving from Grand Junction to preach on the weekends. Upon graduating from Intermountain Bible College, he moved to Vernal in June 1975.

The Vernal Christian Church broke ground on the new building site in September 1975. Much of the work was done by members of the congregation. The building was soon completed enough that the church moved to the new building on 10 September 1978. Mike Moseley was called to be the full-time minister on 8 October 1978.

The church was dedicated on 25 February 1979. Moseley served until 1979 when he was replaced by Dale Crowell. On 16 May 1982 Evan Lockwood became the new minister and served until September 1983. Blaine and Delores Corbin donated one-half acre of land on 500 North for a parsonage. Bob Kelly served as minister from December 1983 until 1991, when Rick S. Dunn was appointed as the minister. About twenty to thirty people attended the church in the beginning. Membership grew to 45–60 by 1976. In 1993 about 200

members attended church meetings.In 1993 plans were made under Dunn to build a new church west of the first church at 1845 West 750 South. Plans included using the old building for a youth chapel and Sunday school.[14]

The First Baptist Church was organized on 22 November 1946. Feeling the need for a Baptist witness in Vernal, the Roosevelt Baptist church set up a large tent and started a revival meeting on 10 November 1946. Reverend R.E. Cure did the preaching and Harold Dillman led the singing. It was under this tent the first Baptist church of Vernal was organized, with sixteen charter members. In August 1948 the congregation moved into a structure at 100 South 288 East which was expanded over the years. Groundbreaking for a new building on west Highway 40 was held 22 April 1979, and the congregation held the first services at that site on 19 July 1981. The church sold its first building to the Landmark Missionary Church.

A Baptist church was begun in Fort Duchesne and Gusher when Fort Duchesne postmaster George A. Wilson became very ill and his son Reverend Harold A. Wilson, who was pastoring the Grace Baptist Church in Denver, was notified. He took a leave of absence to come and assist his mother, Lula, in the post office. He immediately began a Sunday school in one of the barracks on the compound and invited the people of Gusher and others in the area to attend. The church was called the Gusher Union Church.[15] The attendance averaged between thirty-five and forty people each Sunday; many of them were government employees.

Due to the prolonged illness of his father, Harold Wilson resigned his pastorate in Denver, obtained part-time employment with the Interior Department, and continued his church for eighteen months. Wilson tried to get one of the people at Fort Duchesne to assume the responsibility of Sunday school superintendent to keep the church going. None of the men would commit themselves; however, Elsie Domgaard agreed. When it became evident to her that the church was no longer welcome at the compound, Elsie called a meeting at her father's store in Gusher. Al Semkens and Jess McCarrel volunteered to go into the mountains and cut logs to begin building a church house in Moffat. In the meantime Semkens and his wife offered the use of their old home for a temporary meeting place.

When the logs were brought off the mountain, others volunteered to help build the church; donations were received from fourteen states and from area residents, including wealthy Chinese merchant Wong Sing. The church was eventually completed and still sits on the north side of the road in Gusher.[16] It is called the Gusher Baptist Mission and is now used for summer Bible study.

The Indian Baptist Church is located on the Whiterocks Road one-half mile north of Highway 40. This Southern Baptist church has been in operation about thirty years, and Serris Winn is the current pastor. Its membership averages around 100.

Grace Baptist Church is an independent, fundamental church. On 2 October 1977 the church held its first Sunday service at the American Legion building in Vernal. Wallace Higgins served as the interim pastor until January 1979 when Richard Asire was called as a full-time pastor. In September 1982 Grace Baptist Church held services in a new building at 3816 South 2500 East, where it is presently located in 1996. Grace Christian Academy was then started and is a ministry of the church.[17]

The World Vision Assembly of God congregation also is presently located in Vernal at 444 West 400 North. In 1954 Reverend E.F. Chopper was pastor of the Vernal Assembly of God church, whose congregation met in a little home. Chopper was succeeded by Elmer Ridgeway in 1957; in 1965 Pastor Raymond Ansell and his wife accepted the position and moved into the small house. Church was held in the living room and chairs were set up in the bedroom on Sunday. One morning Pastor Ansell awoke and went into the front room in his underwear to start up the heater. To his dismay and theirs, he found four ladies praying. The house was then enlarged, and later the decision was made to build a church adjacent to the house with the help of all members. Pastor Ansell worked at his day job and worked on the church at night. He was succeeded by Pastor Davis Stinson in 1969, who built classrooms, a fellowship hall, and a kitchen onto the church. Pastors Jack Woodcock, Mark Royers, and Merle Heading followed Stinson, each serving about two years. In 1979 the present pastor, Stanley Arias, accepted the position and moved into the house, where he lived until it was torn down in 1988. In 1984 the name was changed to the World Vision Assembly of God.

In 1980 Pastor Arias began a Christian day school with up to sixty children attending. Arias was the administrator and Mary Snow (Young) was the principal. When the oil bust occurred in 1985, the school was discontinued. Effie Peyton donated mechanical electronic bells to the church which were enjoyed by the people living in the area. However, the bells rang every time the power went out, including the middle of the night, so the decision was made to disconnect them. About ninety people presently attend the church each Sunday; thirty-two hold membership cards.[18]

Landmark Missionary Baptist Church also is located in Vernal. The families of Dan Rambo, Jim Smarr, and Dallas Allee moved to Vernal and began meeting together. The pastor of the Farmington Missionary Baptist Church came to Vernal to ask if the families would like to start a missionary Baptist church, and the church was then formed. Pastor Robert Ledford started meeting with the new membership of ten in the Kiwanis Scout House in February 1980. The church purchased a building and property from the First Baptist Church of Vernal in 1982. A total of six pastors have served since the church was founded.

Our Saviour Lutheran Church is located at 370 South 500 West in Vernal. In the 1940s traveling missionaries of the Lutheran church's Missouri synod occasionally visited the homes of a few Lutheran families who lived in Vernal. In 1953 a Lutheran mission was established in Rangely, Colorado, and for several years the families living in Vernal attended church in Rangely. In 1958 the Lutherans in Vernal asked that the pastor of Trinity Lutheran Church of Rangely also serve them. The first services of the Vernal mission were held in November 1958 at St. Paul's Episcopal Church under Reverend Sigmund Boegl, pastor of Trinity. Later worship services were held in the Kiwanis Scout House until August 1966 when the present worship sanctuary was completed.

Our Saviour Lutheran Church was organized in 1960 with a membership of forty-six communicants and thirty children. In 1966 a committee presented plans for building a one-story structure with areas for worship, fellowship, classes, kitchen, and lavatories. The Lutheran cross was constructed by C.P. Pederson and placed on the southeast corner of the building. The building was dedicated 21

August 1966. In 1979 a new educational building containing six classrooms was completed.

The Faith Lutheran Church east of Roosevelt operated during the oil boom. Membership has since fallen off, and, although the building still stands, church members attend the church in Vernal.

A Seventh-Day Adventist church is located in Vernal at 263 West Main. The church began in Vernal in the late 1960s with members meeting at the home of Warren Banner. In 1972 a home on Main Street was purchased and converted into a church. It is the only Seventh-Day Adventist church in the region, so at the present time area members all travel to Vernal. There are about fifty members, with fifteen residing in Vernal. Pastor Dean Lifshay comes to Vernal twice a month from Price to conduct services. Warren Banner, head elder, manages the church and conducts services the other two weeks of each month.

A Presbyterian church was located in the valley in the 1930s and is listed in the Uintah County Archives WPA book of records. No further information has been located.

Other churches currently operating in the county include Church of the Nazarene, Bethel Chapel, and the Pentecostal Church of God.

Many Ute Indians have their own religion, and when one gazes up at the mammoth "Prayer Rock" of the Indians, or views the extensive rock art on the walls lining Little Brush Creek, or learns of the significance of the Sun Dance, the reverential awe of these people is apparent. In discussing Ute morality and religion, Uintah Reservation Indian agent John Critchlow claimed the Utes were polygamous and unchaste, but he also stated that the Utes possessed a degree of kindness, justice, and integrity unknown to many whites. Critchlow tried in vain to entice area Utes to attend Christian services in his home.[19]

Critchlow tried to establish a mission on the reservation. In 1881 he persuaded the Presbyterian church to send two school teachers to Whiterocks for a few months. According to his report, neither had sufficient time to proselytize as well as teach. A Unitarian minister was induced to come to Ouray from Boston to work with the Uncompaghre Indians. After three weeks the minister was unable to



Ute Indian Dance Ceremony. (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne Collection)

gain a respectful hearing from what he called a "sullen" people, so he departed.[20]

It was not until about five years after the Utes took up the Sun Dance religion that a Christian mission was established on the reservation. About 1897 an Episcopal chapel was built at Whiterocks. Many area Utes have been baptized as Episcopalian, especially those born prior to 1950. Since that time pastors lament that Utes do not regularly visit the Episcopalian or any other Christian church except to attend funerals or weddings. A survey was made in 1965 by a team of Brigham Young University interviewers which showed that 51 percent of area Indians claimed to be Episcopalian, 22 percent Mormons, 7 percent Catholic, 5 percent Native American (peyotists), and 15 percent other.[21]

Because Indian-white relations have always been of major interest in county life, it is well to note a proselyting venture of the 1880s. On 20 May 1883, at a ward conference of the LDS church at Ashley, Jeremiah Hatch, Israel J. Clark, Thomas Karren, Jeremiah Hatch, Jr., George Albert Glines, and Thomas Bingham, Jr., were blessed and set apart to labor as missionaries among the Indians. With Apostle Francis M. Lyman, the group began missionary activities at once, it was reported, "but when the brethren began to baptize the natives,

the agent at Whiterocks agency got angry. Still about a hundred or more Indians were baptized. Subsequently, a few years later, the agent drove the missionaries out and the Indians for fear of having allowances cut off became excited and did not dare keep the Mormon missionaries among them."[22]

In later years the Mormons have made other efforts to convert the Indians to the LDS church. The LDS church has always been dominant in Uintah County, with 15,156 members in 1995, followed by the Catholic church with about 1,000 members. Other denominations in the county have memberships ranging from thirteen to 300 people.[23]

ENDNOTES

1. See Wilford Woodruff, Journal, 18 June to 22 July 1886, and Thomas Bingham, Jr., personal history, copies of both located in Uintah County Library Regional History Center; personal interviews of author with Clara Jenkins and other Woodruff descendents.

2. Gustive O. Larson, *The Americanization of Utah* (San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1971), 39.

3. The information on Uintah Stake was provided by Joe Winder, Uintah Stake Clerk. See also "Uintah Stake and its antecedents to 1956," unpublished manuscript located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

4. Andrew Jenson, *Church Chronology* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1899), 147.

5. For more information on the history of LDS wards and stakes in the county see the LDS Church folders in the Uintah County History Center.

6. Episcopal Church, *Quarterly Report,* 1 January 1894; James W. Beless, Jr., "The Episcopal Church in Utah: Seven Bishops and One Hundred Years," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 36 (1968): 84–85.

7. Beless, "The Episcopal Church in Utah," 85.

8. See folder 2014 in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center

9. See Episcopal Diocese of Utah annual report of 1993.

10. Beless, "The Episcopal Church in Utah," 84–85.

11. *Uintah County's Historical Sites and Homes,* comp. Doris Burton and William Jolley (Vernal, UT: Uintah County Historic Preservation Commission, 1989), 7.

12. *Builders of Uintah*, comp. Daughters of Utah Pioneers of Uintah County (Springville, UT: Art City Publishing Co., 1947), 208.

13. Information on this church was provided by Dennie Herrera and Elna Harris.

14. Information on this church was provided by Helen Darnell.

15. *Vernal Express*, 6 April 1950.

16. Elsie D. Jordon, *Delivered from the Bottoms* (Moab, UT: Elsie Jordon, 1980), 36–38.

17. Information for the Grace Baptist Church was provided by Connie Mobley.

18. Information provided by Terry Patoine and Pastor Stan Arias.

19. See Critchlow reports for 1878, microfilm copy located in UCL Regional History Center, 127.

20. William A. McKewen, 1886 *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs*, 230, microfilm copy located at UCL Regional History Center.

21. See John R. Christiansen, James R. Clark, and Cynthia Sparks, *Social and Economic Characteristics of the Indians on the Uintah-Ouray Reservation, 1965*, Social Science Bulletin, no. 4 (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, 1966), 12.

22. Andrew Jenson, History of Uintah Stake, MS in possession of LDS Church Historian's Office. See also Andrew Jenson, *Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia* (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Company, 1901), 139–41.

23. Figure of LDS members provided by Gayle McKeachine, LDS regional director. Number of Catholics obtained from the local secretary of the Catholic church, and others figures from the respective churches in Vernal.

10

First Order of Business

EDUCATION IN UINTAH COUNTY

Educational beginnings in Uintah County date from 1874 when Indian agent John Critchlow established the first one-room school on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation for the Ute Indians at Whiterocks. Before 1880 Uinta Basin was a part of Wasatch County with schools under that county's jurisdiction. Alva Alexander Hatch was one of the first school trustees appointed for Ashley Valley by Wasatch County officials.[1] As Utah was not yet a state, the territory paid half the school expenses and the district residents paid the other half.

The early settlers undertook to provide education for their children. As soon as a small settlement was established, they began looking for ways and means to start a school. These first schools were very humble and were often held in homes. The first white settlers with children began arriving in Ashley Valley in the fall of 1878, and a one-room log cabin was built on Teancum Taylor's property east of Ashley town at about 2220 North 250 West with William C. Britt as the teacher.[2] Another one-room log school was organized in Mountain Dell (Dry Fork) that year with Mark Hall as teacher. (A cinder-block school later was built in Dry Fork in 1917.) When Indian troubles

flared up during the fall of 1879, the schoolhouse on Teancum Taylor's property was disassembled and rebuilt at the east end of the Ashley townsite, affording better protection for the children. Many people in the Ashley area moved their cabins to the town of Ashley.

People living on the Bench (Vernal) in the fall of 1879 moved together, forming a fort. School was held in the log cabin home of teacher C.C. Bartlett until a little log school was completed about 1 November 1879 in the fort at about 32 West Main. This cabin was also used by the LDS church for meetings until a small white church was built to the west.[3] The log school was built in the midst of a large sagebrush plain.[4]

A U.S. land office was established in the territory in 1869, and settlers were required to live on the land according to the Homestead Act of 1862. Before this time, settlers in most Utah settlements followed the Mormon village pattern of settlement, with farmers living in villages and traveling out to their farms to work the land. Being required to live on their homesteads placed hardships on farmers in regard to providing an education for their children, since they were scattered all around the valley, making it virtually impossible for children to attend school at one location, especially with the transportation facilities available at that time. Consequently, a number of small school districts and small schools, often just one or two rooms, were established in the county to accommodate the scattered population.

When Uintah County was created in 1880, education was immediately addressed by the selectmen. On 5 June Joseph H. Black was appointed county superintendent of schools, with William Ashton and E. Ayers appointed as a board of teachers examiners.[5] The early schools were a real proving ground for teachers. It was said that Martha Rupple took a bullwhip to school and that she knew how to use it. She cracked the whip the first day and even the larger boys stayed in line. Many young knuckles felt the wrath of a teacher's yardstick.

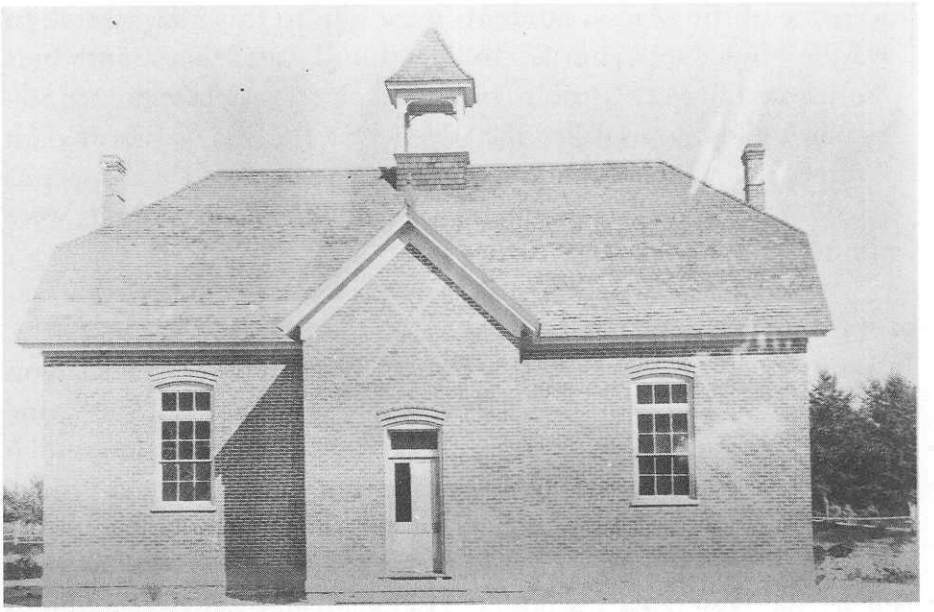
Girls came to school dressed in long-legged underwear and long woolen stockings. Winters were hard with cold temperatures and deep snow. The schools were heated with big pot-bellied stoves and one teacher taught all grades. Each room had a water bucket, and the

students all drank from the one dipper in the bucket. The county superintendent of schools visited the schools periodically.

On 7 June 1880, two days after the appointment of the county superintendent, county selectmen established four school districts.[6] District 1 included Incline (Jensen) and the Ashley Fork River bottoms up to Naples. Everything west of District 1 through Vernal and north to about 1000 North and west to the upper end of the valley was in District 2, which also included the school already in existence on the Bench (Vernal.) District 3 embraced the area north of District 2, including the Ashley School below the town of Ashley. District 4 included the area from the mouth of Dry Fork Canyon west through the settlement of Dry Fork, where a school was already in existence by 1878.[7]

Between 1880 and 1914, when all districts within the county were consolidated into the Uintah County School District, some twenty-two local districts had been established throughout the county.[8] Through the years, there was much restructuring of existing districts and many new ones formed. When one school district was discontinued, its number was assigned to a new district. Each school district was a separate entity, having no affiliation with the other districts. Each had three trustees who were elected by the people in the particular district. The trustees decided how much money was needed to operate the school and presented the request for the appropriate mill levy to the county selectmen (commissioners, after Utah became a state). If a new school building was needed, members of that district voted to decide if the district should bond for the school. Most district schools operated seven and one-half consecutive months a year; but a few were in operation only five months. Changes occurred after Utah was made a state in 1896, and the state began making educational reform laws. By 1898 schools had three sources of revenue: district taxes, county school taxes, and state school taxes. District trustees had the power, according to the school law of 1897, to levy taxes of five mills without submitting the matter to a vote of the people. The district rate could be as high as twenty mills, which required approval of the district residents.[9]

On 3 January 1881 selectmen made boundary changes to District 1, and District 5 (Maeser) was created. The few people residing in



5th District Schoolhouse in Maeser. (UCLRHC collection, A. B. Atwood photo)

Maeser (Mill Ward) had been unhappy about sending their children to school in the town of Ashley, as the children had to cross streams and go through heavy brush to reach the school and often could not attend due to high water. People in the new district could not obtain aid from the selectmen to build a school, so various private residences were used for school. In 1882 Sterling Colton donated land for a school near 1850 North 3000 West. School trustees Robert Bodily, Philip Stringham, and William G. Reynolds began obtaining logs and other material to build a schoolhouse. Lumber was obtained from the Alma Johnstun sawmill at the head of Deep Creek. Snow was deep by the time they were ready to build, but the log cabin was completed and school was held with Viola Pierce as the teacher. The building was also used for LDS church meetings.[10]

In about 1888 a one-room log cabin school called the "Mud Temple" was erected at 2682 West 1500 North. This building soon became too small and a brick structure was built in 1890. It was located ten blocks south at the northwest corner of the Maeser store intersection at 1500 West 500 North. It was named Bingham School

and some of the Maeser students were sent to this new school. In 1892 the Mud Temple burned to the ground. Later that month bids were secured for a two-room, brick building to replace the school. The new building was called the Webster School and was located on the same site. While this building was being built, the LDS chapel was rented for school use. The Bingham and the Webster schools were built from the same plans.

On 2 May 1899 a petition asked that a new school district be created from portions of District 5 (Maeser) and District 4 (Dry Fork). It was granted, and Silver Gate School District 16 was established on 10 May 1899. This school was located near "Remember the Maine Park" in Dry Fork Canyon. The school remained in operation until 6 March 1905, when the district was annexed to Maeser under protest from the Maeser residents, as the Maeser schools were already overcrowded.[11] In 1910 a new two-story schoolhouse was built at 1120 North 2500 West replacing both the Bingham and Webster buildings. In 1970 a new Maeser school was built at 2670 West 1000 North.

The settlement on the Bench was first called Ashley Center. The local log school was in school District 2. In 1881–82 a second log school was built.[12] Due to rapid growth in the vicinity, the school was soon divided and the children were placed in several locations, including part of the McClellen Hotel at about 32 North 100 West. In 1888 a new two-room, brick building was built which became known as the Central School. This building was constructed where the present Central School is now located at 250 South Vernal Avenue. This school was also soon outgrown and children were placed in rented houses and buildings around the area until a third room was built onto the school.

The Odekirk School was established southeast of Vernal before 1894; however, no further information has been found. A one-room school was located on the old Winder homestead at 1030 East 500 South, which may have been the Odekirk School; Heber Odekirk was a trustee and his daughter was a teacher.

The Washington School, a brick building still standing at 266 North 500 West, was built in 1895. The school was only in operation for two years because trustees thought it was too far from the center of population. The overcrowding problem continued, and in 1900 a

two-story, brick building was built north of the three-room Central School. In 1935 the first tubular fire escape in the Uinta Basin was installed on the south side of the building.[13] The foot of the fire escape was often a gathering place for students trying to see who could climb up.

When this building became overcrowded, some of the children had to attend classes in the old three-room brick school and in what were called the "Green Bunks," which had been moved in behind the Central School. By the late 1930s and early 1940s students were being sent to the vacant seminary building which had been built onto the tabernacle, to the Congregational church which Wilcox Academy had vacated, and to the old Uintah Academy (junior high building) next to the Uintah High School.

In 1942 the little three-room building was torn down and a new Central School was constructed on that site with Work Projects Administration funds. The population expanded rapidly, and a walkway was constructed to connect the upper levels of the old and new buildings. This made it necessary to move the fire escape to the north side of the old building. This old building was used until it was demolished in 1971. A multipurpose room was built onto the new school in 1970. In the 1990s the school board repeatedly discussed discontinuing the use of this building, but lack of other classroom space prohibited such a move.

After the Meeker Massacre in northwestern Colorado in 1879, the first Ashley school was moved from Ashley Town back to the Taylor property where it had begun. This little log building was used until 1905 when William Preece donated ground at 2220 North 250 West and a new school called the Ashley White School was built. This school operated until 1917.

On 23 January 1883 Union School District 6 was created for the settlers of lower Ashley where Union LDS Ward had been created. A log-cabin school called Union was built on the Walter Anderson property across from the first log chapel which was later replaced by the old brick Ashley Ward Chapel at 2020 North 500 East. As the people living on Brush Creek had to travel several miles to attend the Union School, a new district was requested; however, the selectmen left them in District 6 and on 6 August 1906 ordered the local trustees

to provide a school for the area residents. A large white building was later built and operated until after the consolidation of school districts, at which time a new brick school was built in Ashley near 2100 North 500 East, near where the first Union log school had been located. The children from both the Union School and the Ashley White School were taught together in the new school after 1917.

Union School District was later enlarged to include the area from the Colorado line to the Wyoming line, including the area where Flaming Gorge and Manila are located, which was then part of Uintah County.

Naples School District 7 was formed on 3 March 1884.[14] The Naples community was first served by a school conducted in the granary at 1882 South 1500 East of Mrs. Lydia Remington, with her daughter Roxie as teacher. Later a small one-room addition was built onto the one-room house. Remington then moved into it, and school was held in the larger room. A one-room, log school was built in the fall of 1889, providing more satisfactory quarters.[15] In 1899 a new brick, two-story school house with a basement was begun on the west side of the highway. In the fall of 1900 school was held in the new building, which had a large bell on the roof. In 1935 another building was built directly north of this building.

In 1966 a new Naples school building opened on the east side of the highway. Both of the old buildings have since been razed. Students from the former Davis, Jensen, Bonanza, and Redwash schools attended the new school. This building was designed to incorporate a then new concept in teaching known as open classrooms—several classes of each grade were clustered in semi-separate areas called pods. An additional pod was added to the school in 1981.

Glines School District 8 was created on 2 March 1885.[16] School was held in a log building which had been constructed in 1884 as a church. It was located north of the present Glines Ward Chapel at 1510 West U.S. Highway 40. About 1892 another building was erected by the people of District 8. At first it was one large hall with a south entry; curtains divided the room for classes.[17] Because the building was painted red, the structure was referred to as the "Little Red School House." The small log building remained in use to supplement the red school. In 1902 a new brick school was built. It was a

two-story, four-room, red-brick structure similar to the Central and Maeser schools. When this school closed in 1934, the children of Glines attended school in Maeser.

Riverdale School District 9 was organized on 7 December 1885.[18] A school was built by Dr. Harvey Coe Hullinger at his own expense just beyond the Ashley Creek bridge on U.S. 40. Hullinger even hired and paid the teacher the first year. Seven years after the school was created, the school district was divided and two new schools were built—one school was 1.5 miles to the south and the other was a mile to the north. Quoting Dr. Hullinger: "The School District officials took the furniture and other equipment from the old school and whacked it up between them without consulting me or saying thank you."[19] This episode caused Hullinger to leave Jensen and move to Vernal. The school district continued until 3 October 1904, when Riverdale District was discontinued and annexed into Merrill Ward (Naples.)[20]

Pleasant View School District 10 (Davis) was created on 4 June 1888. The first school built was a log cabin on the George A. Davis property near 1050 East 3500 South.[21] Davis was the first teacher. The second school was a large four-room brick building built in 1904 at 4000 South 1500 East. It was used until 1935 when the Naples and Davis schools were consolidated into one school at Naples.

Deep Creek School District 11 was created on 22 April 1890, when Teancum Taylor presented a petition.[22] School was held in a cabin on the property of Ben Jones. Later a large one-room schoolhouse with two windows was built. When this schoolhouse burned down, local children were bussed to the LaPoint school.

School at Jensen had first been held in the H.M. Moon residence at about 8335 East 6500 South where Lydia Chatwin (Wall) taught Annas Blizzard's and Elizabeth Rasmussen's children. When School District 1 was created in 1880, a little schoolhouse was built in that area.[23] William Ainge taught in the George Ainge house, and W.F. Billings taught for five years between 1886 and 1891, first in the Daniels log house, later at the Andrew Dudley home, and then in the A.N. Timothy home.

Jensen School District 12 was created on 5 March 1891, and two schools opened in the district. An adobe school was built at the foot

of the hill on the west side of the road about one-half mile north from the Highway 40 turnoff.[24] After this school district was formed, Jensen residents referred to the Jensen schools as the upper and lower districts. In 1904 when this upper-district school burned down the children were moved to the lower district and consolidated with Jensen School District 1. The other upper school was held at the Cap Burton place at 3800 South 10100 East.[25] This school remained in District 12 until 2 August 1906, when a petition from Samuel Haslem and a majority of the taxpayers of District 12 asked the selectmen to annex that district into Jensen School District 1.

Other schools were held in Jensen after consolidation of all area schools into Jensen District 1. A school called the Lone Tree School was located below present Dinosaur National Monument. A concern was expressed over that school location since children lived on each side of the Green River and some had to cross in a rowboat. One teacher, Louise Thorne, lived on the east side of the river. Parents called a meeting to discuss building a new school; however, an agreement could not be reached on which side of the river it should be built, so school subsequently was taught in several different locations.

Several schools were begun and discontinued on Brush Creek west of the Dinosaur road. A school was also held on the Sunshine Bench. By 1902 a brick school had been built on Highway 40 at about 8775 East 6000 South. An addition was made in 1907, with other additions subsequently made through the years. The children from the upper schools were eventually bussed to this Jensen brick school. Under a state consolidation order, the school was closed in 1967 under protest from area residents. Most of the children were then bussed to Vernal and attended Central School; a few were placed in Naples School. The old Jensen school building was razed in January 1971.

On 2 December 1895 a petition was presented to the county selectmen asking for a school district to be established in the Henry Fork vicinity near the Wyoming line which was the part of Uintah County lying north of the Uinta Mountains and west of the Green River. The selectmen were in agreement to form Henry Fork School District 13, but since no officers were recommended for the new dis-

trict, the petition was tabled for more than a year before it was approved on 16 September 1896.

Southview School District 14 was created on 5 June 1895.[26] It included the area south of Vernal beginning at a point near present 1750 South Vernal Avenue and going west and south a few miles. Joseph O.B. Eaton had moved his family into a little dirt-floored cabin east of the 500 West and 2500 South intersection. Most of his thirteen children were still living at home. As soon as possible, a larger home with a wooden floor was built near the original home. Both school and Sunday school were then held in the little cabin for all the neighborhood children, with Frank Abplanalp as the teacher. In 1895 a one-room, sawed-log structure with a shingle roof was built not far from the old Eaton home and Eaton presented a petition to the county selectmen asking for a school. Alonzo A. Mitchell and William Gillman were made trustees of the school and Earnest Eaton was appointed treasurer. The schoolhouse was located about one half-mile north of the intersection of 500 West 2500 South. About twenty-six families and a few single men lived in this area in 1896, which was called Eatonville.[27] This school operated until 1912 according to the Uintah County assessment roll.

On 25 November 1898, Manila residents asked for a school district, and Manila School District 15 was created.[28] Willis Twitchell, Benjamin Slagaowski, and Frank Ellison were appointed trustees, with bonds fixed at $250 each.

On 1 May 1905 another petition was received from the area asking for a school district in the Linwood area to be formed out of Manila School District 15. The petition was granted on 6 November 1905 when Linwood School District 17 was formed. It was suggested that this new District 17 and the Wyoming District 13 join together in the construction of one school to serve both states. The school subsequently was built on the state line—half in Utah and half in Wyoming.

The first school in Dragon was established at the Black Dragon Mine in the fall of 1904 as part of the Jensen District. Later this building was moved to Rainbow and used as a school. On 9 April 1906 C. O. Baxter requested on behalf of Dragon and vicinity residents that they be taken out of the Jensen District and given their own district.

The commissioners approved the request, creating Dragon School District 13. A one-room, frame schoolhouse was built in Dragon. This district later was discontinued and again consolidated with Jensen District 1. Dragon again applied for a school on 2 June 1908, and it was granted. W.A. Banks was the prime mover. It became Dragon District 21. When the Dragon and Rainbow mines were closed, local residents moved to Bonanza. In 1937 a school was opened at Bonanza with children from the Independence, White River, Eureka, and Little Emma mines attending.

A number of towns sprang up after the Indian reservation was opened to white settlement in 1905. By 1906 selectmen had received several requests to form school districts on the former Uintah and Uncompahgre reservation lands. The county selectmen toured the territory and decided that new schools should be provided for the settlers who had taken out homesteads. During the next few years several new school districts were organized. A new school was assigned to District 12 on 1 July 1907.[29] It took in a portion of the territory east of Roosevelt, including Ballard and Independence, and was called the Dry Gulch District 12. District 13 was again established, this time embracing the territory north of District 12 and south of District 16. It was called Louisville School District 13 (Bennett) and was created on 1 July 1907.[30]

Education for Indian children living on the Uintah Indian Reservation was provided as early as 1874 at Whiterocks. With the opening of the Uintah Reservation in 1905 and the establishment of a number of homesteads in the area, the county commission organized Whiterocks School District 16 on 17 April 1906.[31]

Moffat District 18 was formed 1 July 1907, with the saloon owners of the area acting as trustees.[32] This was the area formerly known as the Strip, now Gusher. A log school was operated until 1912, when a one-room, frame structure with a belfry containing a 1000-pound bell was built. This building was destroyed by fire in January 1919 and was replaced with a new brick school which still stands on Highway 40 in Gusher.[33]

Another group on the reservation applied for a school district, which was approved on 5 August 1907. It included the territory

around the Uinta bench on the former Uintah Reservation and was called Alta School District 19 at Fort Duchesne.[34]

Residents of the area around Leland petitioned the commissioners for a school on 19 March 1906. The commissioners agreed to travel to the area and investigate. After the trip, approval was made and the area was designated as District 9 on 21 April 1906. It was later referred to as Randlett District 9, and it included the section of county lying near Leland, with about twenty students.[35] This occurred after the Indian boarding school at Randlett (Leland) had been discontinued.

Uteland became District 20 on 11 May 1909. It included the area southeast of Whiterocks, including Deep Creek, Tridell, and Taft. This district later became Liberty School District 20 and included North Liberty School (Tridell) and South Liberty School (LaPoint.) The first school held in Taft was at the John Starr Indian House and was used by the people of Taft and Tridell. School was later held in the C.B. Bartlett home, then in another Indian building, and subsequently in the log home of teacher Sarah Drulard.

In 1913 the North Liberty School was conducted in a log building with a wooden floor in Center Draw; it also served as the meetinghouse in Tridell. In 1915 identical buildings were constructed for North and South Liberty schools. North Liberty was located upon the hillside west of Tridell; South Liberty, which was at one time called Webb School, was located about two miles west of LaPoint and then south on the Great Lakes Sawmill road. Another school was located about 4.5 miles west of LaPoint on state road 121. In 1919 school was held west of LaPoint in a tent. A white schoolhouse was built next to the tent, near the present-day school. A brick school was built in the same location and used until it was replaced by a new school in 1983.

In 1924 a brick school was also built in Tridell at the end of the main road through town. In 1952 students were bussed to Whiterocks. The Whiterocks boarding school had been closed at the Indian and white children attended day school in that building. This Whiterocks school was closed in 1974, and the children were bussed to Todd Elementary school on the Indian Bench. When a new school

was built in LaPoint in 1983, the children were moved to that location.

The last district to be formed was Hayden School District 22 on 2 May 1911 from portions of Louisville (Bennett) and Whiterocks districts.[36] School was held in two tents until a log school building was erected.

Twelve school districts had been created in the county in 1896; that number increased to sixteen school districts by 1900, and to twenty-two districts by 1914. Each district levied its own taxes, hired its own teachers, and made its own rules, electing three trustees to oversee school affairs. Nelson J. Sowards, county superintendent of schools, undertook to consolidate these twenty-two districts into a single school district in 1914. Although he met with opposition from those who disliked the idea of the prosperous communities having to help support the poorer areas, he gained a sufficient following for the proposal that it was established in the spring of 1914. School districts were asked to submit petitions for consolidation. The board of county commissioners favorably acted upon the petitions, and Uintah School District was organized on 4 March 1914.[37] This move was met with some opposition, especially from the Randlett School District, some of whose members and voters felt the commissioners had only asked for petitions *for* consolidation. This district submitted a signed petition *against* consolidation, but the decision had already been made.[38]

On 27 August 1915, when the Uintah School District presented its first annual report, new schools at Independence, South Liberty, North Liberty, LaPoint, White River, Bridgeport, and Ouray Valley were included in the report. Bennett, Southview, and Liberty were not listed as having schools in 1915.

In 1917, three years after the schools were consolidated, the district bonded itself for $130,000 to build four $12,000, four-room buildings at Ashley, Alta, LaPoint, and Manila; $6,000, two-room buildings at Bennett, Dry Fork, and Independence; $1,000 for portable schoolhouses at Ouray Valley and Watson; and improvements in existing schools as follows: Davis, $2,700; Deep Creek, $200; Dragon, $200; Glines, $3,000; Hayden, $500; Jensen, $2,200; Maeser, $6,500; Moffat, $500; Tridell, $300; Randlett, $300; Vernal Central,

$8,000; White River, $200; and Whiterocks, $100. Both the Maeser and Vernal Central schools were modernized with central heating plants, toilets, and lavatories.[39]

In 1918–19 the national flu epidemic hit Uintah County with tremendous force, greatly affecting the schools. All public gatherings were forbidden and schools had to close. The children were assigned their lessons and studied at home. Each student went individually to school for about fifteen minutes a week to recite lessons to the teacher, both wearing face masks.

In 1934 during the Depression the Uintah School District was unable to finance school a full year and planned to close all schools early; however, some financial aid was received from the government, allowing schools to continue. The consolidation of many schools helped reduce expenses; Naples and Davis met together at Naples; Glines was joined with Maeser; Ashley schoolchildren were transferred to Vernal. Whiterocks joined Tridell, while Bennett, Leota and Randlett were consolidated. At this time stokers were placed in the furnaces of these schools to provide more even and economical heat. Still, county schools closed early, on 5 April 1935, when funds were exhausted.

During the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s many large, modern elementary-school buildings were completed. W. Russel Todd Elementary School was built in 1957 on Highway 40 near Whiterocks turnoff, and children from many of the older elementary schools on the west side of the county were consolidated into this school, including Alterra (grades one through eight), Avalon, Ballard, Bennett, Fort Duchesne, Gusher, Hayden, Leota, Ouray, and Randlett. By 1994 enrollment in the school was 363 students.

Ashley Elementary was built at 350 North 1150 West in 1961. It took the overflow from Central School in the Vernal area including students in Ashley Ward and some from Maeser. A new school in Naples was built in 1966 where students from Jensen, Redwash, and Davis were sent. A new school in Maeser was built in 1970, and Dry Fork and Deep Creek students were bussed to this school. Discovery Elementary was established in the Vernal area at 650 West 1200 South in 1980; it also picked up overflow from Vernal and included children from the Glines area. When a new school was built at Davis in 1983,

children from Jensen, Redwash, and Bonanza were transferred to Davis from Naples. A new school was also built in LaPoint in 1983 using the same floor plan as that at Davis. After the new LaPoint school was built, Tridell and Whiterocks students were bussed to LaPoint.

The school board felt that consolidating the small outlying schools into large modern schools would benefit both the children and the school district. However, local school buildings helped constitute a community's identity and residents protested, fearing this move would damage the economies of these areas and make them ghost towns. This fear has materialized in many areas.

At a school board meeting on 9 May 1995, a decision was made to restructure Ashley Valley elementary schools. The new configuration will place kindergarten through second-grade students at Davis and Maeser, third- and fourth-grade children at Ashley and Naples, and all fifth-grade students at Discovery. Central School ceased to be an elementary school.

When the school districts were consolidated into one district, a Board of Education building was built in Vernal in 1917 on the corner of Second South and First West. It was a one-story structure with a basement, built of concrete and native brick.[40] A new 9,500-square-foot school board office was completed in 1977 at 635 West 200 South.

At first, the district schools only provided education for the first eight grades, which was generally all the education local youngsters received. However, as some students desired a higher education, various academies and Beach College came into existence. The early schools operated by churches, Beach College, and Indian schools were not supported by the county mill levy, nor were they under Uintah County supervision.

Uintah Stake Academy

At a meeting of the high council of the LDS Uintah Stake held 15 September 1888, action was taken on a letter received from President Wilford Woodruff suggesting the establishment of a church school in the stake with a board of not less than five or more than seven members. Members chosen were Ruben S. Collett, Phillip Stringham,



Field Day at Uintah Academy. (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne collection)

Henry A. Woodruff, C.C. Bartlett, George P. Billings, Barnabus L. Adams, and James Hacking—a board member from each existing ward. In the summer of 1891 a lot was purchased from J. R. Workman for the sum of $225, with Workman donating $75 of that amount. Later the present LDS tabernacle (now temple) was built on the site.

In October, Henry Peterson, a graduate of Brigham Young Academy, was hired as principal. On 2 November 1891 the Uintah Stake Academy opened in the Leo Voight building at Third West Main Street while the new building was being constructed. Although this was the same building where the Beach Business College had been located, the two schools had no connection. School opened with fourteen pupils in grades nine through twelve; but before the year was over, fifty-six students had enrolled.

The first academy building—a one-room frame structure—was built on the northwest corner of the lot under the supervision of C.C. Bartlett at a cost of $1,000. The second year, the school opened on 3 October 1892 with Nelson G. Sowards as principal and twenty-one pupils. Before the close of the second term, the enrollment had

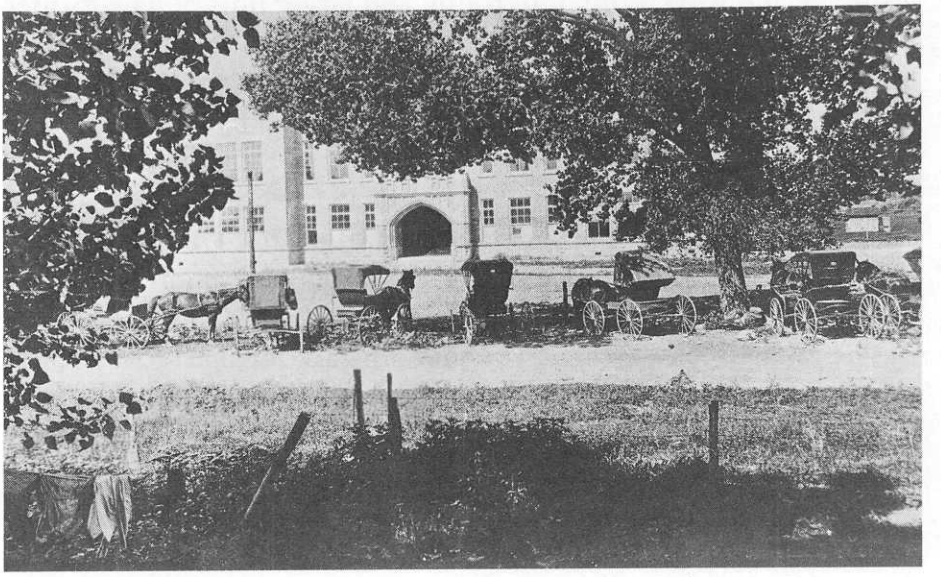
increased to sixty; by the end of the year seventy-five pupils had enrolled. Due to the large enrollment, more room was needed. An addition was made to the building and was completed on 9 September 1893. After the tabernacle was built and dedicated in 1907, it was sometimes used as an auditorium for school functions. J.R. Workman had built his new social hall on the southwest corner of 500 West Main Street, and the school's athletic programs and social functions were held in this building. Due to lack of funds no classes were held during the year of 1894–95. The school was reopened 20 September 1896 with an enrollment of fifty-three students. Andrew B. Anderson of Lehi was principal.[41]

The academy was the first institution of higher education in the area, with the exception of Beach College, although advanced courses were not offered until 1896–97. The academy apparently was supported entirely by local residents until 1901–1902, at which time the LDS church appropriated $842 towards its maintenance. Beginning in 1906–1907, the school extended the range of its activity, adding more subjects and organizing an athletic program. The school became overcrowded to the point that classes had to be held in the tabernacle. Faculty meetings were held in the upper hall of the tabernacle. This building was not totally adequate for a school, creating some unexpected problems. To alleviate the overcrowding, two rooms were rented from Pardon Dodds.[42] In 1911 the Workman Social Hall was used as the main building, with classes also being held in the white building by the tabernacle.[43] A new building was completed in 1912 at a cost of $30,000. It was located one block west. Not until 1914 was the academy established as a four-year high school.[44]

The Uintah Stake Academy, as a church school, closed its doors in the spring of 1923. The Uintah School District purchased the property for $6,000 and granted the LDS church the privilege of using certain rooms for its priesthood and young ladies' organizations.[45] The building reopened as Uintah High School in the fall of 1923—the first free public high school in the county.

Seminaries

When public high schools replaced church academies, the LDS church began providing seminaries near the schools where religious



New Uintah Academy, later Uintah High School in early 1920s. (UCLRHC collection)

classes were held. In 1923 George S. Tanner, a young unmarried man, came to Vernal as the first LDS seminary teacher. At first, a room was provided in the house south of the high school building for the classes. Later, when the school became overcrowded, the seminary was moved into a smaller room in the high school building so classes could be held in the larger room in the house. One hundred and two students were enrolled and attended classes the first two years of the seminary. In July 1925 Uintah Stake authorities purchased the H. L. Reid property at 159 South 600 West across the street to the east, and classes were held in that residence for about a year. The stake began an addition on the east of the tabernacle for a seminary in October 1925. This addition could hold about sixty students. The tabernacle seminary building was used until 1937 when a new seminary building complete with stained glass windows was constructed south of the old high school on 200 South and 600 West. The LDS Family History Center is now housed in this building.

In 1955 a new seminary building was built across the street east of the new Uintah High School at 161 North 1000 West. In the winter of 1970 a new addition was added which included a third classroom,

a storage and workroom, tool room, and larger library. The former library was converted to an office. Seminary is now provided in this building for Vernal Junior High students. In 1986 a third seminary building was built in close proximity to the new high school on the Maeser highway.

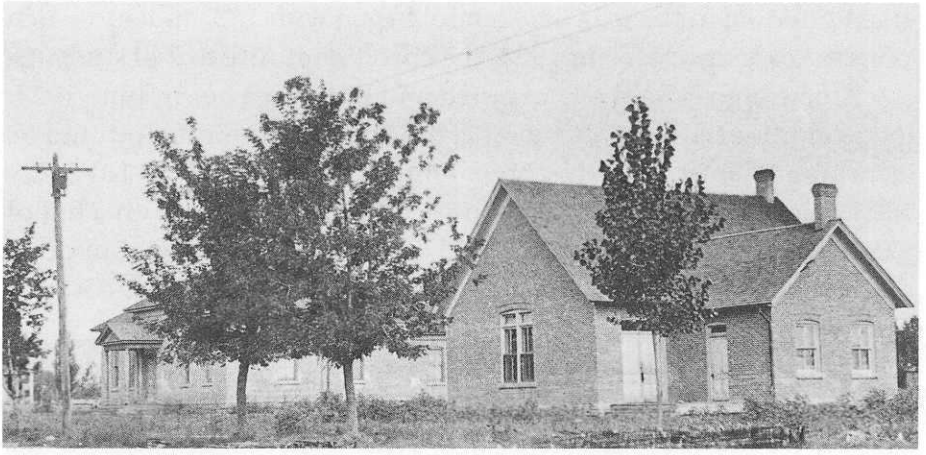
A seminary was added to Alterra High School in 1936. It provided religious classes until it burned down on 26 November 1945.

From the beginning, the seminaries and high schools have been separate and distinct institutions. At the request of parents, students can be granted release time by school officials during regular school hours to attend classes in the nearby seminary buildings. The only physical connection between the LDS church and state institutions is a common bell that signals the changing of classes. The cost of operating the seminaries is borne entirely by the LDS church.[46] Released time is also granted to other students to leave campus for instruction from other denominations.

Wilcox Academy

As part of its program to offer an alternative to the Mormon church's influence on education, the Congregational Educational Society established the Wilcox Academy in Vernal in 1903, with school being conducted in Woodward Hall and the IOOF Hall until completion of Kingsbury Congregational Church in 1904.[47] A school building was erected, and both the academy and the church building were dedicated on 11 December 1905. High school work was introduced in the fall. The high school classes were held in the church building; the primary, intermediate, and grammar grades were held in the new building. This academy was the first in the county to offer a four-year high school course.[48] Relations between it and the LDS Uintah Stake Academy were cordial. Athletic and scholastic competition between the schools contributed a vigorous element to Vernal social life. For eighteen years the Wilcox Academy was a missionary school, costing $99,000 from national Congregational missionary funds to sustain its activities.

In about 1908, Nellie Rodabaugh arrived from Omaha, Nebraska, to teach at the academy. She had a niece in Omaha named Pauline Stonecypher, and Pauline applied when a teaching position



Wilcox School and Kingsbury Church. (UCLRHC collection)

became available at the Vernal school. The job description read that a teacher must know the rules of basketball and sing alto. Pauline qualified in both and was awarded the job. She arrived in Vernal to begin her teaching career in 1909. In 1912 she married Leo Thorne, a local man.[49] Since Pauline Stonecypher was the only teacher in the county who understood basketball, she was called on to organize both boys and girls basketball teams. The small woman also was the official referee for all the games, with the big boys towering over her.

The school closed in 1924 after Uintah Academy was made a public high school and gained accreditation. It was the church's policy to provide accredited education only where it was needed. When such education was provided, the schools were closed so that funds could be spent in a community without a school.

Uintah High School

In 1923 the county school board decided to purchase the Uintah Academy building which had been built in 1911–12. The LDS church, which had financed the Uintah Academy, discontinued its support. Uintah High School was established in the academy building that fall. W.A Paxton was the first principal, with a staff of eight teachers. A fifteen-member band was organized under the direction of William F. Hansen, and the first yearbook was published, with Lamont Holfeltz as editor. Shop classes were held in a little one-room

green building in the rear. The school began with 180 students; when Wilcox Academy closed in 1924, the enrollment rose to 240 students.

A new high school was planned and bids went out in June 1924. It was announced on 12 September 1924 that a junior high would be incorporated into the high school. John E. Anderson of Salt Lake City was successful in securing the contract for the building with a bid of $76,000. The new building, located south of the academy building, was accepted by the school board on 16 September 1925; its cost was $108,702.

Uintah High School was admitted into the Northwestern Association of Secondary Schools in the years 1927 and 1928. The association embraced ten states; only eight Utah schools attained this honor in 1927 and only three in 1928. In 1929–30 the first football team was organized by Dunn Taylor.[50] During the next few years, an extensive beautification and landscaping project was undertaken. Over 3,300 loads of dirt were hauled by faculty members and students to fill in around the buildings. In 1946 the auditorium was completely redecorated and equipped with modern tile and lighting at a cost of $5,000, of which the high school provided two-thirds and the school district one-third. By 1947 the school had grown to an enrollment of 712.

In 1931 Leon P. Christensen, county surveyor, voluntarily donated his services to survey the large letter U on what has become known as "U Hill" west of Vernal. Under the direction of Lowell Fox and Harold Lundell, forty boys worked diligently carrying rock to create the seventy-five-foot letter.[51] This project instilled new life and enthusiasm in the school and community. Each year at homecoming the U is whitewashed and lit up by the students during the football game. It has become a favored tradition for this landmark of the valley.

Uintah High School's original colors were blue and white. In 1933 the board of control of the student body submitted a petition asking to change the colors to red and white to enhance the basic Indian design theme. An Indian head had been adopted as the official emblem and the nickname of "Fighting Uintahns"—now "Fighting Utes"—had been formally accepted. After the new colors were approved, the school song had to be changed to correspond

with the new colors; so in 1934 a school-song contest was held. The present school song was submitted by O. Norman Olson, being chosen over six other submitted original songs.[52]

Uintah High School has had many memorable teachers and a few characters. Principal Harold Lundell found that a cow had been put in his office one night. Frank Wright, a former athletic star returned to be coach and Electa Caldwell are just a few of the notables. Caldwell taught different generations during her thirty-two-year reign in the business department. She was the typical straitlaced teacher and she was all business. With the intense rivalry between Roosevelt and Vernal high schools, the students were at first stunned and then spurred-on to victory when she once led the assembly in cheers. Two years before she retired, a new generation was even more surprised when she repeated the act because Electa had become even more straitlaced. But, seeing little enthusiasm among the students, she led the band down the halls, opening every class door and yelling for the students to join the march to the center of the building, where she led them in cheers while the principal stood in the door of his office in disbelief. They won too.[53]

In 1954 Uintah High School moved to 161 North 1000 West. The new building cost more than $860,000. The ninth grade was left behind with the junior high school. Vernal Junior High remained in the old buildings until 1967 when a new building was built to the west. The old north building was torn down in 1971; by 1975 a new community swimming pool and park were built adjacent to the old south building, which was then razed.[54]

In 1986, after three years in construction, a new $19 million Uintah High School was completed on Maeser Highway. The former high school then became Vernal Junior High School, and the junior high school west of the swimming pool became the Vernal Middle School. Bonding for the new high school was completely paid off in 1995.

The school started out with approximately 250 senior high students in 1923, with 465 by 1935. By 1991, 1,150 students were enrolled in the high school, that number had dropped in 1994 to approximately 1,140.[55]

Alterra High School

On 3 September 1933 Alterra High School was established to serve the western half of the county.[56] The name Alterra means "high ground." School opened a few days late in an old abandoned building on Indian Bench which had previously been used as an elementary school. Registration and remodeling began almost simultaneously, and students became accustomed to studying to the accompaniment of hammers, saws, and floating dust. The doors and windows had all been knocked out and livestock had been using the building for a shelter during the cold winter months. Many of the upper-grade students initially were opposed to attending such a lowly institution; however, it was soon to become a proud educational experience as the students became close to each other and school spirit blossomed.

As the work progressed, many boys were given the opportunity to work to pay the ten-dollar tuition fee. Before the year was over and the building was completed, more than 180 men and boys had worked on the building. Much of the lumber used in the new school came from the old Independence and Hayden schoolhouses. It was sometime later before the shabby coal house and outside lavatories were replaced by inside lavatories and a furnace room. At the time this school was built, only 32 percent of the students of high-school age had been attending high school, because they had to travel up to thirty miles to Vernal to attend Uintah High School. Many benefits were derived by the "west side" students, who now had a high school within their reach to attend. The first year 190 students enrolled at Alterra. The year before that, only about fifty students had attended school.

Alterra experienced rapid growth during its eighteen years of existence. During the 1938–39 school year the school received accreditation from the Northwest Association of Secondary and Higher Schooling. Alterra became a junior high school in 1951 when the west side Uintah County high school students joined with the east side Roosevelt students of Duchesne County to attend the new Union High School. The Alterra name remained attached to the junior high until 1962, at which time the junior high students were enrolled at

the new West Junior High, which is located one mile south of the former Alterra site near the U.S. Highway 40 junction.

Union High School was erected on the boundary line between Uintah and Duchesne counties in 1951 and was jointly operated for a time by both counties's school districts. The federal government, taking into consideration the large area of tax-exempt Indian land located in Uintah and Duchesne counties, made a special grant of $250,000 toward the building of Union High School. This grant was issued on the condition that Uintah and Duchesne counties jointly raise the balance necessary to build. In May 1969 Duchesne County was given full jurisdiction over the school. In 1986, after thirty-four years of joint operation of the school, the two school boards signed a contract turning over Uintah School District's interest in the high school to the Duchesne School District. Some students from Uintah's west side continue to attend the school, with Uintah County paying a fee to Duchesne County.

Ashley Valley High School

It has been found in Uintah County that all children will not adapt themselves to formal school programs. Children who were unable to make social or economic adjustments frequently became discouraged and lost interest in school. Ashley Valley High School (AVHS) was created in 1989 as an alternative to a formal school pattern to meet the needs of these students. Its success has lowered the number of dropouts in the district from sixty-three in 1988 to twenty in 1993. Six previously independent programs were consolidated under the umbrella of AVHS: Youth in Custody, Adult Education, Young Mothers, English as a Second Language, Summer School, and Alternative Education. Others have since been added to the school, including tutorial classes in math, educational service to inmates of the Uintah County Jail, and night school to accommodate the needs of area adults and students short of credits toward graduation. Help has been provided to further develop the Ute Tribe Education Program and to combat the district truancy problem. The school had been located at 650 North Vernal Avenue; in the fall of 1995 the school had a new permanent home in the old Central School building. It presently serves 165 students and has had as many as 225

enrolled. The Ashley Valley High School system is based on the premise that each student must take responsibility for his or her education. Parents, teachers, and administrators focus on the needs of each individual and assist him or her in developing a positive attitude and skills.[57]

Vernal Junior High

A decision was made by the school board in the spring of 1922 to establish a junior high school in the county to include the seventh through ninth grades. In Vernal the junior high students were separated from the lower grades and placed in the old two-room Central School building, with their own principal, James W. Christiansen. Throughout the rest of the county the junior high students were kept in the same schools as the elementary pupils, and each school principal was in charge of the ninth grades, which were designated as part of the junior highs. These schools which participated in the program were Maeser, Glines, Ashley, Naples, Jensen, LaPoint, Fort Duchesne, Randlett, Wilson, and Bennett. When school commenced in the fall of 1922, 175 pupils enrolled in the junior high program, with about thirty-five students enrolled in ninth grade in the different locations.

An incentive for establishing junior high schools was to make it possible for the district to participate in the state high-school fund. Uintah County had paid in about $1,800 to this fund and had not been able to receive any of the money back because the ninth grade had been included in the sectarian schools. The money was then paid in proportion to the number of pupils attending the ninth grade in the various junior high schools. Wilcox Academy was conducting a junior high and continued to do so; however, as a private sectarian school it did not qualify for state funds.

In 1924 the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades from Central School and the ninth grade from Maeser were brought to the Uintah High School building as a junior high. When the new building was built to the south in 1925, the old building was designated as the junior high and the new building as the senior high. All grades from the seventh through the twelfth used the same auditorium and other facilities.[58]

In May 1934 the board made the decision to make all the schools

in Ashley Valley, except Jensen, elementary schools and transported all ninth-grade pupils to Vernal Junior High.[59] Vernal Junior High School was first organized as a separate entity from Uintah High School in 1955 when the high school was moved to the newly completed facilities on 1000 West. The junior high then occupied the buildings vacated by the high school. All seventh- and eighth-grade students from Maeser, Naples, and Jensen were transported to this new school. A new facility was begun in 1967. After the students moved into the new building, the old south building remained in use as a gym, auditorium, and classroom facility until the new complex was completed in 1970 at a cost of more than $2 million. The new junior high was located at 721 West 100 South to the west of the old buildings and is currently the Vernal Middle School.

In the early 1980s growth in the Uinta Basin had created a need for more school rooms. When the elementary schools became completely overcrowded, sixth-grade students were moved to the junior high, bringing the total of junior high students up to 1,200. Since the building could only handle 800 students, double sessions were held. With over 600 new students in the district, the county's public-school student population rose to 6,440.[60]

With the completion of the new high school on the Maeser highway, eighth and ninth grades were moved to the building on 1000 West. There were 175 students enrolled in Vernal Junior High in 1935; that number had increased to 1,060 by 1994.

West Junior High and Middle School

West Junior High School was built and dedicated in 1964 at a cost of $679,514. It is located five miles east of Roosevelt and is adjacent to Todd Elementary School. Built for the junior high students living on the west side of the county, it opened with an enrollment of 259 students in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. The entire student body was bussed to school from a distance of two to thirty miles.

In 1992–93 West Junior High was converted to a middle school for sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. The sixth grade was moved from Todd Elementary and placed in the new West Middle School. The ninth-grade students were transferred out of West and given a

choice of attending Union High School or Uintah High School. In 1994 the enrollment was 219 at West Middle School. In 1993 Duchesne County and Uintah County were involved in a dispute over where the kindergarten through ninth-grade students living in Uintah County on the Duchesne border should attend school. This problem had not been resolved at the time of this writing.

Vernal Middle School

In 1982 Vernal sixth-grade students were moved from the elementary schools and joined with the seventh-grade students at the junior high. Knowing that the new high school to be built on the Maeser highway would not be completed before 1986, double sessions were mandatory, with the eighth- and ninth-grade students attending school in the morning and the sixth- and seventh-graders attending in the afternoon. At first these students were considered a part of the junior high, but later in the year Principal John Childs started designating the sixth and seventh grades as middle school. Year-round sessions were discussed but not instituted, and double sessions continued for four years.

When the new high school was completed, the junior-high students were moved to the old high school location at 1000 West, and the middle-school students were left at the former junior-high complex. The students became known as the Mustangs and chose blue and grey as their school colors. Dr. William Murphy was the principal of the middle school through 1994, at which time he was replaced by A.J. Pease.

Adult Education

Uintah School District organized adult-education classes in 1959 with Rhoda Thorne DeVed as supervisor. In 1963 the state approved the adult high-school completion program, making it possible for many people to receive high-school diplomas. In addition, an adult drivers education program became available. The school district also has a community school program which brings the community into the schools and makes the buildings available for use without cost.

Uintah District Learning Center

Jeanne Stringham, wife of Dr. Paul Stringham, acquired an interest in special education when she was elected local state PTA repre-

sentative. After moving to Vernal, she became acquainted with Sadie McConkie, who was the only person in Uintah County providing foster care for handicapped children. McConkie felt that there were many handicapped children being kept at home who could benefit from some kind of schooling and encouraged Jeanne to find a place where these children could receive basic educational and social skills. Stringham drove to Salt Lake City several times to obtain advice from Irene Elgren at the state office of special education. Hyrum Toone was instrumental in convincing her to go forward in developing a program. A board was formed with Ute leader Harvey Natches, Sam Snyder, Lois Bennion, Wayne Smuin, Reverend Raymond McDonald, and Jeanne Stringham as members.

The board had to secure testing and training under properly trained persons, so Stringham called the head of special education at Utah State University and explained their needs. He laughed out loud on the phone before replying, "Lady, if you can start a school without federal funding way out there, I'll supply the training." He later had to do just that. In 1966 a new school in Naples had just been completed across the street, leaving the old buildings vacant. The group was given permission to move into the old building and begin a school for mentally and physically handicapped children. Coal to heat the building was an immediate need, and Norm Murphy from Roosevelt, who had donated coal for some of Dr. Stringham's needy patients, came to the rescue and supplied coal.

Jeanne Stringham approached both the Ute Tribal Council and Uintah School District for assistance. The tribe donated funds and a bus driver. Local residents supplied cash, books, carpet, art supplies, games, and other needed materials. The school district provided transportation and the use of the building. Principal Len Gotfredson of the new Naples school invited the students to come across to the new school for hot lunches, and the Utah social services department also supplied materials and aid. A teacher was trained by Dr. Hoffman of Utah State University.

Uintah School District assumed responsibility for the New Life Training Center in August 1969 after executive and public meetings with school officials, social services people, and parents of handicapped children.[61] Before this time everything had been donated. The

Stringhams always furnished the turkey dinner at Thanksgiving time and even the teacher's wages were paid from donations; yet there were funds left in the treasury when the district took over. When the new Maeser school was built in 1970, the school moved to the vacated Maeser school. The name was changed to "The Children's Center" on 2 September 1975.

In 1977 the old Maeser school was demolished to make room for a new structure built just to the north for these special children. The new $350,000 facility contained 11,000 square feet of floor space, and the name was changed to Uintah District Learning Center. Seventy-six children enrolled in the new school and as many as 100 children have been enrolled at times, with sixty-two enrolled in 1994.

Colleges

Beach Business College was established on 5 January 1891 under the direction of H.B. Beach. The college operated until November of that year, when the Uintah Stake Academy was organized.

In 1920 the first University of Utah branch summer school classes were held in the Central School building. The faculty included Professor Christian D. Steiner as superintendent and three teachers.[62] Since that time special classes have been offered from time to time from the University of Utah.

In 1940 there was agitation for the establishment of a state-supported junior college in the Uinta Basin, but it was doubtful any early action would be taken, particularly since a junior college in 1938 had been opened by the state at Price in Carbon County. Again in 1959 a concerted effort was made to obtain a college, and the legislature passed a bill which authorized the establishment of a junior college; however, due to lack both of funds and the required number of anticipated students, it did not come to pass. Upon further study, it was decided to use existing facilities and have Utah State University (USU) operate a resident center in the area. This proposal passed the legislature, and in 1969 the education center was placed under the control of the Utah State Board of Higher Education, with the state providing funds. Instructors were faculty members at USU who were often flown to the center by chartered planes to classes in Vernal and in Roosevelt. Qualified residents of the area also were used as instruc-

tors. Its official name was Uintah Basin Center for Continuing Education; however, it was often called "Uintah Basin's Fly-In College." The college was first housed in the Roosevelt post office building, with classes also being taught in Uintah school district classrooms in Vernal.

In 1990 a building for the continuing education center was built in Roosevelt behind the Union High School with community-impact-board money. This program had used as many as eight locations for classrooms before the center was built. In 1987 the Ashton Energy Center building was considered as a possible community center; but in 1988 a record number of voters turned out and soundly defeated the proposed acceptance of a $1.9-million grant from the Utah Community Impact Board to purchase that facility. However, in 1990 Vernal City approached the Utah Community Impact Board for a $475,000 grant to purchase the building for an education center. The grant was awarded and the city purchased the building in 1991 for $350,000 and leased it to the Utah State University extension program for operation and management of a learning center in Vernal. In June 1994 Vernal City signed the deed over to the USU Vernal Education Center.

Now called the Utah State University Education Center, the facility continues to grow. The Vernal center also houses the Uintah Basin Applied Technology Center and Utah Rehabilitation Services, among other groups. In 1983 there were 419 students enrolled. That number grew to 1,000 students by 1993 and continues to grow yearly. Advantages over a junior college include the fact that USU provides a variety of four-year degrees, concurrent enrollment through USU allows high school students the option to receive college credit, academic scholarships are available, and advanced placement classes are offered. By attending college in the basin, local students save an estimated $6,000 a year in rent, food, and transportation costs.

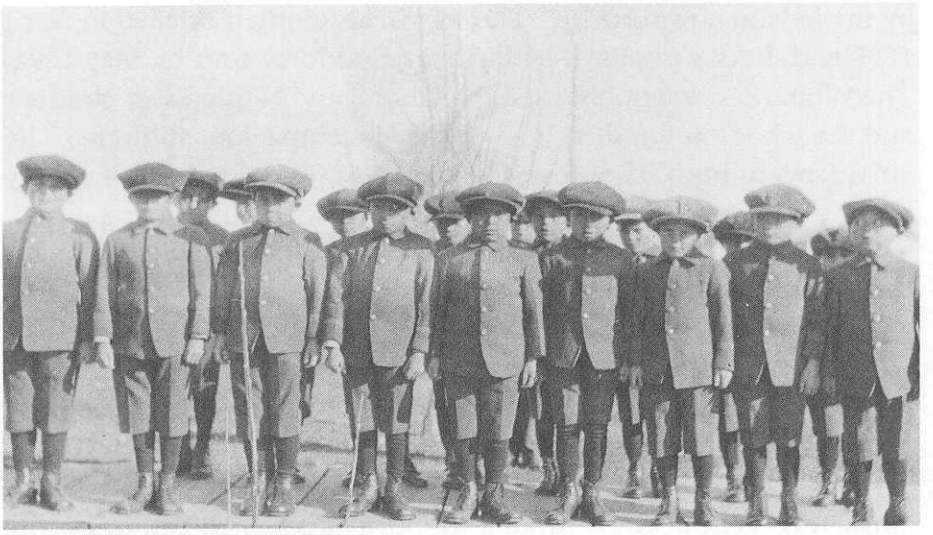
USU also provides the Cooperative Extension Services. In 1911 L.M. Winsor was appointed the first county agent to help teach farmers new and better methods of agriculture. Winsor was the agent before the extension division was set up by Dr. John A. Widstoe. In 1913 Widstoe appointed Don B. Colton of Vernal as board chairman to direct the extension activity and assist in formulating state poli-

cies. Since that time many county agents have served the county, as have also home-demonstration agents who help the homemakers of the county.

Education of Ute Children

Education proceeded slowly on the Ute reservation. From the years 1874 to 1910, one agent after another attempted to establish and maintain schools on the Uintah and Ouray Reservation and also on the Uncompaghre Reservation. Agent John J. Critchlow established a one-room, log-cabin school in 1874 for the Uintah Ute children at Whiterocks; it was taught by his sister-in-law.[63] This school only operated for three months because few students attended and Critchlow had no money to feed the few who did come. He tried to keep school in session between 1877 and 1879, again without much success due to lack of funds and employees plus the fact that students had to travel too great a distance to attend school.[64] In 1880 a three-room, one-and-one-half story, 16-by-32-foot frame school was built at a cost of $2,000, and Uintah Valley Boarding School opened in Whiterocks in January 1881 under contract with the Presbyterian Board of Home Missions. The facility could board forty students, with additional space for ten day students. Three employees were hired—a male teacher, a woman assistant, and a cook. Attendance was poor—only sixteen students boarded in 1882. In 1883, when the Presbyterians became discouraged and withdrew, the school, with an enrollment of seventeen students, was placed under government supervision. In 1890 the frame building was moved to another location in Whiterocks (where it has remained) and the name was changed to Uintah Boarding School. In 1891 two brick buildings were constructed, making a total of three buildings located next to the agency. By 1899 the frame building was used for employees; it later was used for storage.

Some Utes complained that when the children went to boarding school their traditional long hair was cut off, they were not allowed to speak the Ute language, and they were severely punished if they did. Students had to wear uniforms and every attempt was made to strip them of their cultural identity. The objective of the boarding schools was, in fact, to make them like white Americans. Some



Whiterocks Indian Boarding School boys in uniform. (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne collection)

accepted the white man's teaching, that the old ways would hold their children back in this world, while others fought to maintain their tribal culture.

A school was constructed for the Uncompahgre Utes four to five miles southeast of Fort Duchesne at Randlett in April 1885. Native opposition was strong, however, and an estimated attendance of 453 students never materialized. Discussions to combine the schools began, but interband contention prevented the merger.[65] The school was closed by 1886 because the parents refused to send the children to school. During the year 1888 the department distributed the sum of $1,500 as a gratuity among those Indians who brought their children to school. The Indian police were utilized to persuade the parents to bring their children to school; however, they were not very successful, so the white school superintendent was given the task. The total number of Indians on the reservation in 1890 was 833 Uintah and White River Utes and 988 Uncompaghre Utes, for a total of 1,821, with all children needing education.[66]

There soon came a renewed effort to educate Indian children. Two new schools, boarding institutions for the Indians, were constructed in 1892 at Randlett and at Whiterocks and were maintained

by the federal government.[67] The school at Randlett opened in April 1893 with twelve pupils; it had increased to forty-four by May 1894. The Whiterocks school housed the Uintah and White River children and the school in Randlett housed the Uncompaghre children.[68] The attendance at both schools was low, as most parents were still openly hostile to the program and refused to allow their children to attend. One government inspector stated he found boys in the school with "long hair and painted faces, handkerchiefs worn on the head instead of hats and behavior in the dining hall more like wild savages than school children attending a well-regulated agency boarding school."[69] By 1896 an average of eighty-three students were attending the Uintah School at Whiterocks.[70]

On 13 September 1899 the War Department was requested to allow the agent at the Uintah and Ouray agency to call upon the commanding officer at Fort Duchesne for soldiers to assist in placing children in school. By 1900 attendance had dropped to fifty-eight students at Uintah. The War Department agreed and army officers were often sent to bring the children to school. Mrs. Robert Marimon, who lived in Whiterocks in 1902, reported, "I remembered seeing a squaw throwing rocks at an officer who was taking her child to school."[71]

The Utes' fears of sending their children to school were often justified. In 1901 a measles epidemic at the Whiterocks school killed seventeen of the sixty-five pupils. On the morning following the first death, according to a report, "nearly all the patients were taken from their beds and carried away by their parents and placed in the hands of the Indian Medicine man."[72] The epidemic reached the Randlett school, where four children died. Superintendent Myton wrote in his report that "the health of the children was good except for the outbreak of measles and chicken pox and many deaths attributed to improper treatment by the Medicine Man." He also stated his opinion that the medicine men were a great nuisance and hindrance to the Indians.[73]

In 1904 five students died at Whiterocks and six students died at Randlett. Up until 1910 the education project continued to founder. The Utes were hostile toward the teachers and the agents for forcing Ute children to attend school, for letting the children die at school, and for accusing Ute shamans of malpractice. They felt that the

teachers had brought about the deaths of Ute children, which they attributed to the "White Plague."[74] The attitude of some whites also may have discouraged some Indians from sending their children to school. A teacher at Whiterocks attempted to find out why students did not attend school. He traveled throughout the Uinta Basin searching for White River and Uintah children of school age. When he got back from his travels, he reported: "I have squatted in their filthy wickiups and counseled with the stubborn savages, only to be told that they had no children, or that their children always died when they went to school, or that they would not let them go."[75]

In 1905 the Ouray school was moved from Randlett and consolidated with the one at Whiterocks. From 1910 to 1925 Mary E. Balmer (Davis) was a teacher at the Uintah-Ouray Boarding School.[76] The Randlett school was subsequently given to the state of Utah, which in turn gave it to the county.

A third government school, dating from about 1890, had been supported by government officers at Fort Duchesne. Henry Harris, a part-blood Indian educated in the east, taught the white children. Some Indian children also were sent to Grand Junction, Colorado, to a boarding school. There were mixed feelings among the Indians, some wanting to send their children to boarding schools, others wanting their children at home.

At the national level, discussion centered around the need to integrate Indians into the local schools. As reservations opened up and as Indians received citizenship, education was to become the responsibility of the states and local governments. With the opening of the Uintah Indian Reservation to settlement and the conferring of citizenship upon the Indians, Utes occupied the same position before the law as other citizens of the state and were brought within all of its provisions. This included the statute known as the compulsory school law, which required every child between the ages of eight and sixteen to attend a public, district, or private school at least twenty weeks in each school year. The attorney general sent a written opinion that this applied to the new Indian citizens as well as to other children.[77]

Within two years after the opening of the Ute reservation to white settlement in 1905, local school districts were established on the former reservation and taxes were levied against homesteaders.

To keep down the cost of education, the local school district worked out an arrangement with the federal government to educate some white children at the Whiterocks School. Local tax revenues were paid to the agency to cover costs.[78] How long this arrangement continued is uncertain. The Indian agent at the Uintah Reservation wanted to contract out Indian students to local schools, but the slow development of public-school facilities made his initiative impractical; the Whiterocks boarding school continued to provide education for the Indians. The Randlett Indian school was given to the state by the federal government in 1911 on the promise that the state would operate and maintain the facility and that Indian children would continue to attend free of charge. The federal government provided periodic subsidies to support the Randlett school. In 1921, 107 Indians attended school; fifty-nine of these were in the public school system.[79]

Attendance of Indian students continued to be a problem. Cutting rations to families with school-age children who did not attend school as well as using the Indian police to coerce attendance were common practices. On 14 June 1921 the federal government implemented compulsory attendance for all school-aged Indian children. Indian agents were required to cooperate with states to carry out the intent of the federal action in the public school systems as well as in the Indian schools.[80] It appears that Indian education efforts on the former Uintah Reservation were a shared responsibility between the federal, state, and local governments. Their proximity to white schools likely determined which Indian children attended public schools. The success of that relationship cannot be determined, but it must have at least worked somewhat, since the relationship continued into the 1920s.

In 1950 when the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) closed the schools on the reservation, Utes began attending integrated schools off the reservation. The BIA began awarding grants to Duchesne and Uintah counties to build schools that would serve whites and Utes. The bureau, under the auspices of the Johnson-O'Malley Act of 1935 and following the termination policies established by Congress in the late 1940s and early 1950s, was attempting to force all Utah children to attend white schools and to acquire white American education, skills, and values. The idea was to integrate Utes into the local communities

near the reservation. The BIA intended to disassociate the young Indians from tribal ways and to prepare them for the termination of special federal obligations. However, all did not proceed smoothly. Joseph G. Jorgensen made the following statement: "While serving as the tribe's education coordinator in 1960, I often met with superintendents, principals, counselors, and teachers from the Uintah and Duchesne school systems. With one marked exception, they all spoke condescendingly about Ute children, allowing that they would tolerate the Indian students in class if they were quiet."[81] Sometimes the Ute children sat in the back of the room and whispered in Ute, which upset the teachers who thought the children were whispering about them.

Uintah and Duchesne counties formed a community education council in the late 1950s to deal with the delinquency problems involving all students. However, attention was not directed to the Ute children's delinquency problems because they believed that this was not their problem but the tribe's. "Whites did not care to work with the recalcitrant youths, since it was their opinion that nothing could be done to solve the Indian problem."[82]

School Issues and Problems

Providing the essential physical facilities for education went a long way to insuring a successful educational program in the county; however, also important were a number of less visible developments, issues, and problems that have involved students, teachers, parents, administrators, and other county residents. These issues included transportation, school-lunch programs, adult education, taxes, salaries, and responses to new fads and fashions.

Transportation to and from school in the early days included walking for the children who lived close to the school, riding to school horseback, or traveling in horse-drawn buggies, wagons, or sleighs. When riding horseback the students often brought their lunch in a lard can and a sack of hay for their horse. Later, school buses were introduced. The first school buses were quite unique. A covered wagon was used in Jensen to bring the children in from Sunshine Ranch and Brush Creek. Most schoolchildren in LaPoint rode in school buses made by Bert Norton, LaPoint blacksmith. Under the rows of seats on each side of the bus ran a three-inch gal-

vanized pipe. The exhaust from the engine came through these pipes to provide heat in the bus, and the pipes became very hot. With a sixty-eight-mile round trip from LaPoint to Alterra High School, the riders often wished the seats were padded and that those with manure-covered overshoes would keep their feet off the hot pipes.[83]

Trucks were used to transport children to high school from Randlett and Ouray; Tridell and Lapoint; Leeton, Bennett, and Wilson; and Naples, Jensen, and Davis. The students were charged thirty dollars a year to ride the bus. Later G.A. Slaugh proposed to furnish new, up-to-date school buses instead of trucks on the four routes at a rate of thirty to thirty-five cents a mile. Students from Dry Fork were transported to Maeser and Vernal in the back of a truck with a canvas stretched over some bows. The dust blew in when the roads were dry, and the students nearly froze in the winter. The bus drivers provided their own buses and some men built a wooden box with a door on their trucks to cut down on the dust. The roads were not paved, and, besides the dust, mud was a serious problem in the spring. Drivers often had to use a wagon and team to transport the students through the worst places. If a big snowstorm came, the driver would hitch a team to a makeshift grader and push the snow out of the roads on Saturday and Sunday in order that bus runs could be made on Monday.[84]

The transportation fee dropped to twenty-five dollars per student in 1931. By 1933 the board made the decision to transport all students free who lived more than 2.5 miles from school. During the next few years the school board accepted the lowest transportation bids, and drivers had to furnish buses and drive on whatever route was assigned to them. Later, bus owners were instructed to paint their buses yellow or orange, and the following sign was to be painted on the back of all buses: "This bus stops at all railroad crossings."

In 1935 the school board decided to purchase one large school bus and use it on the Randlett road. Rules for this bus included no use of tobacco or liquor on the bus and no charge for teachers riding the bus. Bus drivers were placed under bond—maximum $500, minimum $250. Consolidation forced the school district to provide transportation for students to the more centrally located remaining schools, so more school buses were purchased. By 1940 the Uintah School District

owned and operated a fleet of nineteen school buses. These buses transported more than 1,600 pupils from all corners of the county. The district also owned three gasoline storage tanks, located at Uintah High School, Alterra High School, and the LaPoint school. From these tanks, gasoline was distributed to the various buses.

In 1981–82 it cost the Uintah School District $695,317 to transport students. The average cost was $1.35 per mile, which included the bussing of 4,276 students a total of 413,023 miles a year. The buses had become much more modern and safe over the years, even featuring two-way radios. By 1994 the district had thirty-five routes and bus drivers, plus two plush activity buses.

Credit for the first hot school lunches in Uinta Valley goes to Stella Richards, who was teaching in the Union School at Ashley. One hard winter she was concerned about the students eating cold lunches while huddling around the pot-bellied stove. She conceived the idea of having the children bring one thing from home—vegetables, milk, butter, a loaf of bread, or anything the family could spare. Richards then put the vegetables into an iron pot she brought and placed the stew on the pot-bellied stove to simmer until lunch time. She later wrote, "I can still see the kids coming through the snow with their bottles in a stocking and a little bucket of potatoes, a few carrots, an onion or whatever had been assigned." One day during "hot lunch," Ella Stringham of Maeser dropped by the school. She was quite impressed and took the idea back to Maeser. The idea spread, and in a few years most schools were following Stella Richards's lead. Some schools worked with parents, who took turns bringing in a pot of stew for the students. When Ella's brother-in-law Bry Stringham became a senator, he helped introduce a plan to start hot lunch programs in Utah schools.[85]

By 1933 lunches were being prepared by the Parent and Teachers Association (PTA) in Central School, with the parents donating food and committees preparing the lunches. A proposal was made to build a kitchen and dining room in the basement of the school, and lumber and nails were provided to build a partition for this purpose. In 1934 a cafeteria was opened for Uintah High students, where a salad, a hot dish, and a dessert could be purchased for ten cents; a few pennies more would buy bread, butter, and milk.

Government programs came into the picture in 1934 and 1935, and hot lunch programs were introduced to other elementary schools. A committee headed by Mrs. Phil Stringham met with the board, asking consideration be given for a school hot-lunch project. Students could still bring produce and receive credit for lunch or pay three cents a day. Food was provided for children of families who needed relief and the cooks were paid in kind from FERA funds. A $2,242 allotment was granted by the WPA for school lunches in Uintah County in November 1935. This project employed fourteen women; however, it was discontinued at the end of 1935. The general program continued, however, and by 1941 school lunches were in all Uintah County schools when the final one was established in the high school.[86] When the new Central School was built in 1942, a special lunch room was established in the basement.

The National School Lunch Act was passed in 1946. At this time Lola Christensen became supervisor of the program in Uintah County and worked to improve it for numerous years. In 1991 the district school-lunch program fed 2,400 students. Of those eating school lunch, 34 percent qualified for free or reduced-charge lunches. The percentage allowed Central Elementary School to offer a school-breakfast program and a summer hot-lunch program.[87] In the secondary grades, lunch choices include fast foods, and the school-lunch program continues in all the schools at the present time.

Responsibility for public education is one of the most critical obligations an elected group of officials must meet. The biggest problems have always been obtaining enough money to finance schools and finding qualified teachers. School taxes have repeatedly been raised, but Uintah County taxes have been among the lowest in the state.

The district board has met many problems throughout the years, including dress code controversies. In 1965 there were disputes over mini-skirts in Uintah schools. Dressy pantsuits which covered bare legs were not allowed. Dress lengths were measured by teachers and secretaries, and many girls were expelled and sent home in tears. Again in 1972, under statewide media coverage, the board grappled with dress-code disputes with members of the Ute Tribe concerning the length of hair male students could wear to school. The result of this dispute was that girls were allowed to wear pantsuits and boys to

wear longer hair if the present code infringed on cultural, traditional, or religious teachings. In 1994 the board again revised the code, this time to outlaw the wearing of "clothing, accessories, and other personal adornments which display gang symbols" at school or at any school-sponsored activity. The policy also prohibited any type of clothing which displayed "inappropriate" language or illustrations which promote alcohol, drugs, or tobacco.

During the early years of Uintah County, a woman could not teach after she was married. Some teachers married in secret in order to continue teaching. During World War I the rule was stretched and several married women were hired. Women were also hired for outlying areas if a male teacher could not be secured. During the Depression, this rule was strictly enforced as job opportunities were needed for men with families to feed. When World War II began, the rule was discontinued due to a shortage of male teachers.

Teachers' salaries have always been controversial. In the 1930s Uintah County teachers' salaries were on the lower side of the state scale. Superintendent L.G. Noble stated in 1939 that "teachers determine the quality of a school. It is essential that these teachers be remunerated on a basis that will afford them a high standard of living."[88] He was concerned because the salary schedule in Uintah County was in the lower one-fourth of Utah counties. In 1940 the board of education expounded the slogan "Better teachers make better teaching," and Superintendent Noble also stated that "the largest and most important business enterprise in Uintah County is the education of its boys and girls. What we do today will determine what they do tomorrow." He invited public input and support, writing: "Without your support we cannot succeed, with it, we cannot fail"[89]

By 1947 salaries were comparable with those of other Utah districts, and Utah rated seventh highest nationally. Since then, however, Uintah County's pay scale has continuously declined. In 1994 Uintah County teachers were again on the lower end of the wage scale and threatening to strike. At that point teachers were given a raise with a promise from officials that they would try to bring wages up to state level. As this book is being written in 1995, the local school board is initiating a highly controversial configuration plan with the elemen-

tary schools in an attempt to make education dollars go farther and provide the promised pay raise to teachers.

No matter what the county economics have been, the county school board always seems to have a problem with sufficient revenue for salaries, buildings, and equipment. It must be constantly kept in mind that education is one of the great institutions through which better citizenship is obtained. The school board must keep abreast of progressive changes, remembering that the child is always the center of the school program. Throughout the years the board of education has continued to provide modern school buildings, fixtures, and equipment to the best of its ability. Ten public schools were located within Ashley Valley in 1928 with sixty teachers and over 1,600 pupils. This included the new senior and junior high schools located on the same campus, with a combined capacity of more than 800 students. The Vernal Central School housed more than 500 students. By 1967 the number had grown to 4,300 students enrolled in Uintah District schools—2,450 elementary-school children and 1,850 at the secondary level. In 1991 there were 6,702 students enrolled in Uintah School District, making it the twelfth largest school district of the forty districts in Utah.[90] In 1995 the number had risen to 6,839. Education remains an important concern to residents of Uintah County.

ENDNOTES

1. Alva Alexander Hatch, unpublished manuscript, copy located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 1047.

2. There is some confusion over the location of this first school because Teancum Taylor was a polygamist and had another family up Dry Fork Canyon. His history states that his boys went to school at the mouth of Dry Fork and milked cows providing milk for Fort Thornburgh, which was below the entrance to the canyon. Fort Thornburgh was not moved to that area until 1882. When the Maeser School District was created in 1881, school was held in homes around that area until a school was built. School was evidently held in the Taylor home in the mouth of Dry Fork Canyon in 1881–1882. However, the first school I describe in 1878 was north of Vernal and east of Ashley town on T. Taylor's property, which is shown on a 1879 map of the Ashley area.

3. L.G. Noble "Fine Schools Established by Pioneers who settled Ashley Valley," *Vernal Express*, 14 December 1939.

4. There are stories written that the school in the fall of 1879 was held in the house of John Clark, east of town. In the history Mrs. Clark wrote provided by grandson Lloyd Clark, she says the first school of Vernal district was held in 1889 in the house owned by John Clark where the home of Aubrey Hodgkinson now stands at 609 E. 500 S. Knowing the first school was held the fall of 1879, some people thought this was a typing error of the date and changed 1889 to 1879. In Mrs. Clark's handwritten history she states that as newlyweds she and her husband lived with his parents the summer of 1879 when they arrived in Vernal, leaving Vernal as soon as they could the next spring. They came back a few years later and did own the property where Aubrey Hodgkinson built his home. In 1889 the Central School was overcrowded and school was being held in rented houses for some students. Edwin Winder moved to the area in 1900 and purchased property from Israel Clark, father of John, next to where Hodgkinson built. There was a little cabin on the property and he was told it had been a school house. I believe school was held in this cabin just as Mrs. Clark wrote in 1889. See also Daughters of Utah Pioneers of Uintah County, comp., *Builders of Uintah* (Springville, UT: Art City Publishing Company, 1947), 221.

5. Minutes of Uintah County Commissioners, 1:1, Uintah County Clerk's office. Research was conducted of primary sources including old school records and correspondence from the trustees found in the courthouse, Uintah County land records, selectmen minutes, personal histories of early settlers, and the county court record book.

6. The county minutes state that the selectmen created four school districts and indicated that descriptions could be found in the county court records. This book is titled, "Probate Record Uintah County, 1880." A copy of this was made by the author and is located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center. From these records Randy Simmons of the county recorder's office marked the first districts and a map for the author, which can also be seen in the Regional History Center.

7. Descriptions taken from "Probate Record Uintah County, 1880," located in district court records in Uintah County Courthouse.

8. In setting up the first school districts in the 1880s, the selectmen seldom gave the districts a name, just a district number; however, reports from trustees provide the areas or school names. In later years record-keeping was more accurate, as the superintendent of schools sent in reports listing the districts by names and by numbers. Also, in the early records a school district would sometimes be petitioned for, and then, because no one would take the responsibility of becoming a trustee and running the schools, the district would not actually be created or was later rescinded.

9. *Vernal Express*, 24 March 1898.

10. Andrew Jenson, *Encyclopedic History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Publishing Company, 1941), 459; *Vernal Express*, 18 February 1916; Robert Bodily, unpublished manuscript, copy located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 664.

11. Uintah County Commission Minutes, 2 and 10 May 1899, 353–54. See also Book B, 302, Uintah County Clerk's office.

12. The first log school, which was also used as an LDS church, was built where the Sage Cafe is located at 56 West Main. However, in 1881 the church built the little white-frame building to the side of this location and used it for a stake center, First Ward meetinghouse, and a tabernacle. The same year a new school was built, as this little one-room log cabin was not sufficient. See Lucille Richens, "History of Education in Uintah County," 1, unpublished manuscript, located in the UCL Regional History Center, which states that a school was built in 1881 to the west at 146 West Main.

13. *Vernal Express*, 26 November 1935.

14. Uintah County Selectmen Minutes, 3 March 1884, Uintah County Clerk's office.

15. Information provided by Ross Merrill. See also *Inventory of the County Archives of Utah, Uintah County*, 38.

16. Uintah County Selectmen Minutes, 2 March 1885, 34.

17. About 1922 the red building was remodeled and enlarged. It was used solely as a church and recreation center after the school moved out in 1902. It was torn down in 1947 to make room for a new brick chapel; see *Vernal Express*, 20 March 1947.

18. Uintah County Selectmen Minutes, 5 December 1887, 47.

19. Lucille Richens, "Sketch of the Life of Dr. Harvey Coe Hullinger," 15, unpublished manuscript located in UCL Regional History Center, folder 910.

20. Uintah County Commissioner Minutes, 19 September and 3 October 1904, Book B, 258.

21. Uintah County Selectmen Minutes, 4 June 1888, 49. County Recorder Records Book 2, 597, gives a description of land deeded to School District 10 for ten dollars on 27 July 1893. The records indicate when the school no longer existed, the land reverted back to George A. Davis or his heirs.

22. Uintah County Selectmen Minutes, 22 April 1890, 80.

23. Information obtained from Vera Moon Ainge, who possesses her mother's diary telling of the school.

24. Uintah County Selectmen Minutes, 5 March 1891, 95. This is where

the old H. J. Chatwin home and later the Oxborrows' home was located; it is now part of the Dee Curfew farm. Blanche Haslem Wilkins and Vera Moon Ainge, interviews with the author, 1 May 1994 and July 1995.

25. Wilkins, in interview on 1 May 1994, stated she attended this school until it closed in about 1914.

26. Uintah County Selectmen Minutes, 5 June 1895.

27. Larry Eaton, telephone interview with author, 30 June 1994.

28. Uintah County Commissioners Minutes, 25 November 1898, 325, Book 1.

29. Uintah County Commission Minutes, Book C, 42.

30. Ibid.

31. Ibid., Book B, 366.

32. Ibid., Book C, 47.

33. Uintah County Historic Preservation Commission intensive level survey, located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 2086.

34. Uintah County Commission Minutes, Book C, 53.

35. Uintah County Selectmen Minutes, 51.

36. Uintah County Commission Minutes, Book D, 71.

37. Uintah County Board of Education, Proceedings, vol. A, 1.

38. Uintah County Archives, Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

39. *Inventory of the County Archives of Utah, Uintah County,* 40.

40. Ibid., 75.

41. Uintah Academy, Minutes, 37–39, located in the Uintah School Board office, Vernal.

42. Uintah School Board Minutes, 17 October 1911.

43. *Vernal Express,* 15 September 1911.

44. Minutes of Board of Education of Uintah Stake Academy, 43–113, Uintah School District office.

45. Uintah County Board of Education, Proceedings, vol. A, 402.

46. See folder 0130 Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

47. In early copies of the *Vernal Express* Wilcox was spelled Willcox. The first yearbook of the school spelled it Willcox.

48. *Annual Catalogue of Wilcox Academy, 1915–16,* 5, 11; *Inventory of the County Archives of Utah, Uintah County,* 39.

49. Told to the author by Rhoda Thorne DeVed; Leo Thorne was the owner of Thorne Studio.

50. Ruth Hart (Lundell), "Eleven Years Sees Many developments in Uintah High School at Vernal," *Vernal Express*, 10 January 1935.

51. *Vernal Express*, 29 October 1931.

52. Ibid., 11 January 1934 and 14 December 1933. Words to both songs can be found in the Uintah High School folder 1429 in the UCL Regional History Center.

53. Electa Caldwell, unpublished manuscript, located in Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

54. Uintah School District Board Minutes, 16 September 1975.

55. *Vernal Express*, 10 January 1935 and 18 September 1991. Other information from Uintah High School office per telephone call by author, 11 May 1994.

56. Information on this school was taken from two unpublished manuscripts located in the Regional History Center. One is written by Ramona Harrison and Donna Rasmussen; the second by Gwendolyn Wiscombe, June Birchell, Essie Labrum, Nola Hawley, and Wilma Smith. Other information was obtained from the Uintah County School District office.

57. *Vernal Express*, 20 April 1994 and 15 November 1989.

58. The Uintah High School Minutes of 12 September 1924 states that junior high school will be taught at the high school, that the canning factory building will be used as the carpenter shop and for physical education classes, and that the portable school building at Central School be moved. See also *Vernal Express*, 12 September 1924. Viola Caldwell stated that the Maeser ninth grade was moved to the high school building in 1924.

59. *Vernal Express*, 10 May 1934.

60. Ibid., 1 September 1982.

61. See Uintah Care Center Minute Book, in possession of Lois Bennion,Vernal.

62. *Vernal Express*, 16 July 1920.

63. Uintah Valley Agency, teacher's report, 18 July 1882; U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Reports 1873-1900*, microfilm 1070, roll 54, available in UCL Regional History Center.

64. See Joseph G. Jorgensen, *The Sun Dance Religion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), 56.

65. U.S. Department of the Interior, *Annual Reports 1880 and 1890*, microfilm 1070, roll 54.

66. Eugene White to Commissioner Atkins 20 September 1886, *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs (RCIA) 1886*, 226; Gary Lee Walker, "A History of Fort Duchesne, including Fort Thornburgh," Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1992, 1:238.

67. Robert Hughie, paper located in Uintah County Regional History Center, 14.

68. James Randlett, 1894: *Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs;* Jorgensen, *The Sun Dance Religion*, 57.

69. Office of Indian Affairs, microfilm 1070, roll 54.

70. Superintendent G.S. Binford to Agent James Randlett, 9 July 1896; Superintendent Charles Walker to the Superintendent of Indian Schools, 30 June 1896, *RICA 1896*, 308; Thomas G. Alexander, *A Clash of Interests: Interior Department and the Mountain West, 1863–96* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1977), 164, 166, 170.

71. Mable Haub, "Uintah Basin," unpublished paper located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 1377.

72. E. O. Hughes 1901, *RCIA*, 382.

73. H. P. Myton 1901, *RCIA*, 381.

74. Jorgensen, *The Sun Dance Religion*, 58.

75. E.O. Hughes, 1901 *RCIA*; Jorgensen, *The Sun Dance Religion*, 57.

76. A letter from Mary E. Balmer (Davis) dated 1925 from Whiterocks stated she had taught at the Uintah-Ouray Boarding school for eleven and one half years.

77. *Vernal Express*, 29 September 1906.

78. Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report (1907);* Secretary, Department of the Interior, to County Treasurer, 15 December 1909, UCL Regional History Center.

79. See Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report (1921).*

80. Ibid.

81. Jorgensen, *Sun Dance Religion*, 170.

82. Ibid., 171.

83. Joe Norton, "The Builder," unpublished manuscript, copy located in UCL Regional History Center .

84. Leslie Thacker, unpublished manuscript, copy located in UCL Regional History Center.

85. Stella Richards, unpublished manuscript, copy located in Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 0696.

86. *Vernal Express*, 18 September 1991.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid., 31 December 1936.

89. Ibid., 12 December 1940.

90. Ibid., 18 September 1991.

11

Life Blood of the County

WATER RESOURCES

While following an Indian trail which crossed Brush Creek and Ashley Creek above present-day Jensen in 1776, Father Escalante mentioned in his journal that the fertile lands adjacent to the Green River could be irrigated from those two streams. This was undoubtedly the first recorded mention of irrigation in Uintah County, but evidence indicates that prehistoric peoples practiced ditch irrigation along Brush Creek northeast of Vernal. Ditches used by Native Americans were said to have been found by early settlers and later partially reused by white farmers.[1] The first white settlers arriving in the valley saw the same possibilities for the area that Escalante had observed along the Green River and located on land near water. Those who followed progressively settled on land a little farther out, and the borders of the settlement gradually expanded year by year until the waters of the nearby streams could not irrigate the land. Efforts to increase farmland led to the beginnings of a countywide irrigation system.

In Ashley Valley three streams have provided irrigation water to communities and farmlands. They are Ashley Creek (originally called

Ashley River and Ashley Fork), Brush Creek, and Dry Fork. Ashley Creek was the source for the county's first irrigation ditch, built by Pardon Dodds in 1873. The majority of the county's ditches and canals today draw water from Ashley Creek. However, in 1878 ditches were also dug to tap waters from Brush Creek and Dry Fork Creek. These first ditches were usually the work of individuals like Pardon Dodds or of families like the Isaac Burton family and Jacob Burns family who dug separate ditches from Brush Creek. After the turn of the century, when individual and family resources were not adequate for more extensive projects, canal or irrigation companies were organized with numerous shareholders.

Neighbors sometimes grouped together to dig ditches to their property. As the area population grew and newcomers had to settle farther from streams, the need for canals became more evident. Irrigation companies were formed and pooling of resources and labor was instituted. Companies also helped when irrigation disputes were taken to the county court, as a group often made a better impression with the court and could more easily raise money to fight a court case.

The first irrigation ditch that carried water from Ashley Creek is still referred to as Dodds Ditch. In the spring of 1876 a second ditch was made by Robert Snyder and James M. Barker below the Dodds Ditch on the north side of Ashley Creek.[2] Edwin Colton and his brother Sterling filed on water in Ashley Creek and dug the Colton Ditch. The Colton ditch was dug on the west side of Ashley Creek where the Ashley Upper Canal is presently diverted. Colton Ditch water is carried through the Ashley Upper to the Colton Ditch lateral canal in the west part of the valley. The Hardy Ditch began at 1949 North 2500 West, came south to 1500 North, turned east, and ended at about 2000 West. This ditch came out of Ashley Creek where the Central Canal is now located. Ward Murray built a ditch south of the south fork in the town of Ashley and by 1896 it was known as the LeBeaux Ditch. The Mormon Ditch, taken out of Ashley Creek, waters property around 1500 East and still retains its name.

In the spring of 1878 Isaac Burton, Sr., and his sons took the first ditch out of Brush Creek, diverting the water for irrigation purposes in Jensen, and it still bears their name. Thirty-two years later Burton

Ditch Company was formed on 31 March 1910 to build a ditch from Brush Creek to be used by the many settlers who were then in the upper Jensen area. Company stock included 550 shares valued at ten dollars per share, and the first officers were Samuel Haslem, president; Hugh Snow, secretary; and Andrew Murray, treasurer. By 1940 it was called the Burton Canal Company.

The Jacob Burns family, who came to Jensen two weeks after the Burtons, made a ditch from Brush Creek to raise a vegetable garden. The ditch could be traced along the hills long after the family had moved. This area is now called Burns Bench, and the ditch is called Burns Bench Canal. The Burns Bench Brush Creek Canal Company was formed 7 July 1924. It began about two miles northwest of where Brush Creek runs into the Green River and wound south around the lower part of upper Burns Bench. George Wilkins was the company's first president, with Peter Peterson vice-president, and Amasa Caldwell secretary and treasurer. The stock was issued at 300 shares valued at eighty dollars per share; one share watered ten acres.

The first ditch on the south end of Jensen came out of the west side of Ashley Creek a little southeast of 4556 East Highway 40. It was called Paulson Ditch and was built by David O. and J.B. Mackay to irrigate what in 1909 were the Paulson and Chapman farms. As more settlers moved to the area, the ditch was enlarged into the Union Canal. The Union Canal Company was formed on 17 November 1897 and controlled a ditch beginning on the south bank of Ashley Creek in the Riverdale (Jensen) District. The first officers of this company were John A. Angus, president; John T. Rasmussen, vice-president; and A.N. Timothy, secretary and treasurer. The capital stock was $3,000—which was divided into 200 shares. Riverdale Ditch comes out of Ashley Creek and provides irrigation water for land around 4000 East 4000 South.

In the spring of 1878 a townsite was laid out at Mountain Dell around a large spring. In the year 1880 Teancum Taylor, with help from other settlers, built a large cottonwood water trough and placed it in the large spring to make the water easy for all to access. This remained in use until 1933 when it was necessary to improve a short turn in the road for school bus safety. For the sake of sentiment, the old flume was buried instead of being destroyed.

Also in 1878 a small ditch was taken out on the north side of Dry Fork Creek. More settlers arrived and a larger ditch was made in 1879, conveying the water from the creek onto the farming land. This creek is dry about eight months of the year, the water generally appearing in May and disappearing by August.[3] The settlers in Mountain Dell (Dry Fork), which is located twelve miles northwest of Vernal, found a large stream of surface water flowing from a watershed of considerable size in Dry Fork Canyon. A substantial amount of the water disappeared underground in each of the three forks of Dry Fork Creek where the streams crossed an area known as "the sinks" about seven miles upstream from the town of Dry Fork. Usually after August the main channel below the sinks was dry, hence the name Dry Fork.

The men of the community decided to dig a ditch around the largest sink in the canyon in an effort to save the precious water for irrigation purposes. Their efforts were fruitless, as the water along with the fish in the stream disappeared into another sinkhole. In the fall of 1893 a group of men formed the Uintah Milling & Flume Company, capitalized at $26,000 with Lycurgus Johnson, president; Joseph Hacking, vice-president; and John Glenn, secretary. It was decided that building a flume to carry the water over the sink areas was the answer to bringing the water to the valley. It also was claimed that the project would be worth over $200,000 to Ashley Valley since it would bring under cultivation a large tract of land that would otherwise be worthless.

In 1894 or 1895 some of the men in the company built a rough wagon road up the canyon to Horseshoe Park near the sinks, where it was planned to set up a sawmill that had been purchased to saw timber for the flume. The road was built using shovels, picks, and a crude scraper pulled by a horse. In the fall of 1895 lumber was hauled on sleighs down to the site of the flume above the Massey Ranch. The following spring difficult construction work began on the wooden flume. The flume was more than three-fourths of a mile long and four feet wide, and it cost the company $10,000 to build it and to dig ditches to carry the water the remainder of the way. The water was turned into the flume, but the green lumber leaked so badly that the ground supporting the trestles softened and washed away in a few



Wooden Flume in Dry Fork Canyon. (UCLRHC, C. J. Neal collection)

days, causing the trestles to give way and topple over. This entailed another operation to construct a better foundation for the flume. Lumber was sawed at the mill the remainder of 1896 in an unsuccessful effort to raise enough money to complete the project. A deal later was made with Lycurgus Johnson to bring the water down below the sink area, but this effort also failed. The project was doomed for failure because the sides of the canyon where the piers were placed to support the flume were part of a glacial moraine which was unstable when wet. The problem proved too much for the settlers.[4]

In 1912 civil engineer J. Winter Smith concluded that the water which entered the Dry Fork sinks was lost to all practical purposes and that the water did not reappear in either Dry Fork below the sinks or in Ashley Creek Springs. He based his conclusions on color and salt tests he conducted. The Dry Fork Irrigation Company was formed 8 March 1922 at Mountain Dell. Class A stock included 1,141 shares and 500 shares of class B stock, at a value of six dollars per share for both. Each share would water one acre.

Nature eventually did what men could not do. In the summer of 1936 water came to Dry Fork when debris filled the sinks; the water ran over the sinks, giving Dry Fork a nice stream all summer.[5] In 1943 further systematic studies of this sink phenomenon were started. A Bureau of Reclamation geologist made a study and reported that he believed the disappearing water stayed in the Dry Fork drainage, continuing down the valley either in underground deposits resting on the bedrock or in limestone caverns near the surface.

About that same time the Ashley Valley Reservoir Company started a test pit for continued studies but discontinued digging at a depth of sixty-one feet because of lack of funds. In 1944 the Bureau of Reclamation took the pit down to ninety-three feet, and an instrument to record the water surface in the pit was installed. The findings were correlated and it was reported that beyond "any reasonable doubt" the water continued underground down the Dry Fork drainage on the overburden. This water was the source of the Dry Fork spring and perhaps the springs and swamps immediately north of Vernal.[6]

Since the bottom of Dry Fork channel was filled with glacial debris, the idea was conceived to dig a deep trench and put in a wall to stop the flow of water and force it back to the surface. Seismic instrumentation and charges were used, and it was determined that 250 to 300 feet of the channel was filled with debris.[7] Even the modern engineers then gave up.

In 1954 the U.S. Geological Survey began an investigation. Water was diverted from the Mosby Canal into a sinkhole at the head of a small tributary to the main west fork of Dry Fork. Three hours after the water disappeared in the sinkhole an increase in flow was noted at the Deep Creek springs—5.2 miles distant. A test was later made by placing dye into the Mosby sinkhole; fourteen days later, detectable amounts of dye appeared in the Deep Creek springs. From this time on many ideas were explored, studies made, and meetings held with the Utah Water and Power Board. The Bureau of Reclamation and the U. S. Geological Survey worked with them, but the problem of the lost water still remained unsolved.

In 1966 two Soil Conservation Service consultants, Bob Bridges and Dean Maxwell, concluded that no loss of water existed on Ashley

Creek, but it was possible that Dry Fork water could be going underground and emerging in the Ashley Creek springs, the main municipal water supply for the city of Vernal. After consultation with the Uintah Water Conservancy District and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, it was decided to conduct another dye test. Dye was introduced simultaneously at the upper gagging stations of all three forks of Dry Fork and the test was continued non-stop for thirty-six hours. The first appearance of the dye was recorded in the Vernal City water main from the Ashley Creek springs sixty-nine hours after the beginning of the dye input. The dye appeared only in the Ashley Creek springs and not in Ashley Creek above the springs. About 100 hours after the start of the test, all the water distributed by the Vernal municipal water system was pink, a fact which caused consternation when the public turned on their faucets for a drink of water until they were informed by the local radio station that the dye was harmless. No dye was found in tests in Deep Creek springs until three weeks later. The Bureau of Reclamation estimated that 90 percent of the water lost in the sinks in the three forks of Dry Fork reappeared in the Ashley Creek springs. After many years of study at tremendous cost, nothing had really changed—the water from the springs was being used by the companies who had shares in it and Dry Fork was still without water.[8] Dye also was placed in the sinks on Little Brush Creek and Big Brush Creek, and all of this water showed up in the Big Brush Creek spring.

Returning to the earlier years, Alfred Westover, Heber Campbell, Billie Powell, Harry Yarnell, Louis Kabell, and Ben Heater built the Spring Creek Ditch and also the White Wash Ditch, which emptied into the Rock Point Canal after that canal was built. The Island Ditch was also built between Rock Point Canal and Ashley Creek; it ran parallel to the canal and served all the lowlands on the north side of the creek. The Island Ditch Company was started on 6 April 1904. This ditch was taken out of the south branch of Ashley Creek above the headgate of the Central Irrigation Company canal in the Thornburgh diversion. The capital stock of this company was $399.50, divided into 399.5 shares at one dollar per share. This ditch later became known as the Island Irrigation Canal.

In early settlement years, small ditches were built to carry water

to nearby lands; but not until 1880 were significant attempts made to utilize the lands at any distance from the creeks. By the summer of 1880, three canals, the Central, Ashley Upper, and Rock Point, were under construction.[9] On 2 May 1880 Rock Point Canal and Irrigation Company began the construction of a canal that hugged the northern boundary of the valley and covered the land along the hills for the full length of the valley. When the company was incorporated on 23 March 1893, the canal was approximately six miles long. It was enlarged in 1884 from a depth of one foot to fourteen inches. It came out of Ashley Creek and eventually ran back into the same creek. No money was allocated for this canal; the water was called capital stock, and the stockholders were to work off assessments and draw their water through headgates and laterals. The first officers were Sanford Green, John Winn, and Harry Yarnell.

Another undertaking by early settlers was to divert high water from the Rock Point Canal where it crossed the mouth of Steinaker Draw and use it to irrigate the badlands to the east in the Buckskin Hills of Ashley Ward. This water was planned to be used not only for early spring planting but also to fill reservoirs constructed along the route of the canal. When the right-of-way and other legal matters were completed, work began on the canal. It traversed several cuts and a tunnel, winding its way several miles in an easterly direction toward the farming community. Many men put in money and long hours of hard labor with teams and scrapers to build the canal, remnants of which can still be seen going east of 1500 North and 500 East, but for some undiscovered reason the canal was never completed.[10]

The Ashley Central Canal was first envisioned by Nelson Merkley, who came to Ashley in 1879. Merkley took land on the southeast corner of the intersection at 500 North and 1500 West, and his childhood friend James Hacking settled across the street on the northeast corner. A deep ravine ran diagonally across Merkley's farm to a point near the tabernacle (temple) and then east near 200 South. A stream of water ran through there and drained a large area. Water had been diverted to this stream out of Ashley Creek early by Lycurgus Johnson, A.J. Johnson, and David Johnstun, who placed it on their land. The diversion out of Ashley Creek was at the Fort

Thornburgh diversion. Three weeks were spent taking out the water and bringing it to the land in Vernal. The first land irrigated in Vernal was near the site of the future tabernacle, where David Johnstun had located.[11]

Merkley's land extended south to Main Street and 1500 West, and he could not irrigate his land that was above this diagonal stream passing through his property. He decided to dig a canal along the top of his property so he could irrigate all his land. He was told water would not run that way; but he insisted it had to, as he needed the water to irrigate that location. He plowed a furrow, which was the beginning of what is now known as the Kids', or Central, Canal.

The Ashley Central Irrigation Company was incorporated in 1884; its canal was nearly six miles long and was continually improved. The company started with fifty-seven stockholders with capital stock valued at $8,000, which was divided into 320 shares valued at twenty-five dollars a share. The canal covered the area from the lower part of Maeser down to present Vernal City and was later extended to Naples and part of Davis Ward.

The canal taken to Naples was also surveyed by Nelson Merkley, who used a sixteen-foot-long two-by-four board and a spirit level. The canal sloped a quarter-inch each sixteen feet. The rustic survey equipment was built to look like a saw-horse with one set of legs shorter than the other. The ground was so hard that oxen were used to plow the first furrow, and then horses were hooked on a "Go Devil," a handmade scraper constructed of two planks, one shorter than the other, with an end of each board fastened to form a large V, with a short brace between to hold the apparatus firm. This canal served all the land north of a point beginning near the Reynolds Mill in Maeser at 1500 North and 1500 West and running diagonally southeast to a point in the upper part of Naples. All the land lying southwest of this line had to be provided for by other canals. The Upper Canal, the Alta Ditch, and later the Highline Canal were built to carry water to these lands.

Ashley Upper Canal construction work began in 1880, and a company was formed 26 February 1884. The capital stock of the company was $28,000—divided into 1,120 shares valued at twenty-five dollars per share. At the time of incorporation, thirty-eight stock-

holders had subscribed and the canal was twelve miles long, beginning in the mouth of Ashley Canyon just above 7024 North Dry Fork Canyon where the conversion is located. Among the organizers were James H. Glines, Lycurgus Johnson, and S.D. Colton.

Alta Ditch came out of the Upper Canal on the west side and carried water to the Maeser cemetery. The Ashley Water Company was formed and the ditch was taken to about 1500 South. Highline Canal Company purchased the Ashley Water Company in 1913, and the ditch was converted into the Highline Canal. The Upper and Highline canals split just below the conversion at the mouth of Dry Fork and the Highline goes through a tunnel just west of the Dry Fork highway at 3400 North 3500 West. It then runs along the foothills at the west end of the valley in a southerly direction where it passes through another tunnel west of Highway 40 and west of 2800 West 1900 South. The Highline Canal Company construction began on 15 June 1920. This water was to be used during high water or after the commitments of other canals were satisfied. It is used to irrigate land all along the canal, including Davis Ward, to the Green River. The company's first officers were M.M. Batty, president; John B. Eaton, vice-president; and George Slaugh, secretary-treasurer. The incorporators of this canal were Enos Bennion, M.M. Batty, and W.S. Henderson.

Steinaker Canal Company began on 8 May 1915 when a canal was built to carry water coming from Ashley Fork to the area now covered by Steinaker Reservoir. Willis S. Johnson was company president and the capital stock was $6,800, divided into sixty-eight shares. The Bureau of Reclamation built the Steinaker feeder canal as a part of its Vernal Unit. Upper service canals all end on the south end of Davis Ward around 5000 South; Highline Canal extends farther east. The Steinaker Ditch is diverted from Ashley Creek at the mouth of Dry Fork.

In 1887 the county court approved a petition from the people of Riverdale (Jensen) for a water district to be set up near Ashley Creek, giving it the name Ashley Lower Irrigation District.[12] The Ashley River Irrigation Company was formed on 15 February 1905 to enlarge a ditch known as the Mecham-McCarrell Ditch and obtain proper title to the same. The capital stock of this company was

$6,000, divided into 600 shares. Its first officers were John Mecham, president; Moses Boren, vice-president; and Hyrum Mantle, treasurer. Settlers living along Brush Creek formed together in 1906, calling themselves Brush Creek Irrigation Company, and the company incorporated in 1908.

Jensen Irrigation Company was formed 11 April 1914 to facilitate the use of water from Ashley Creek in the Jensen area. The capital stock of this company was $1,600, with 160 shares. Bernard Gardiner was president, David Horrocks vice-president, and Gerald Stewart treasurer.

In 1935 the Mosby Irrigation Company was incorporated for $150,000—divided into 10,000 shares at fifteen dollars per share. Its headquarters were located in LaPoint. Filings were made on 150 second feet of water in the Dry Fork headwaters. Several reservoir sites were filed on including Twin Lakes and Blanchett Park. It was claimed that this would not interfere with water belonging to Ashley Valley or Deep Creek spring. Federal aid made it possible to take water over Mosby Mountain by means of a tunnel and canals to the western side of the county. Directors of this company were V.T. Rice, J.C. Hacking, Frank Huber, Clarence Burton, and J.F. Perry.[13]

Mosby Irrigation Company had filed on water from Dry Fork drainage and had constructed a diversion dam at Blanchett Park. Dry Fork people became alarmed when it was learned the company was building a canal to capture the flow from Twin Lakes, a part of the Dry Fork stream system. These people alerted Uintah Water Conservancy District and Vernal canal companies. Negotiations between Mosby Company and the Ashley Valley companies followed. A compromise was reached in which Mosby was supposed to relinquish all its filings on Dry Fork drainage and the BLM agreed to pipe water across the sinks. The canal to the Dry Fork Twin Lakes was abandoned and the flow to be diverted from Blanchett Park to Mosby was determined. This agreement was then approved by the district court. This happened prior to the dye tests on Dry Fork Creek, which impacted many water rights. Controversy erupted as filings were transferred. Some felt the filings should have been relinquished, but Mosby continued to use that water. The fifty-year lease Mosby held

expired in 1985, and its water stock currently is in dispute as it is being considered for use in the Blanchett Reservoir.[14]

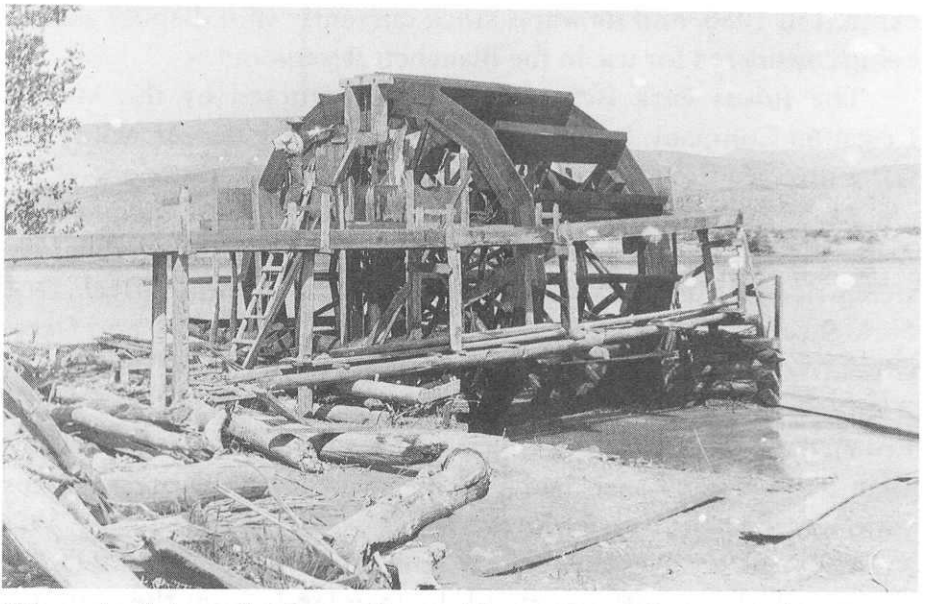
The Julius Park Reservoir was constructed by the Mosby Irrigation Company. It serves as a storage and regulation facility for water diverted from Dry Fork at the Blanchett Park diversion.

All of the canals in Ashley Valley and below were supplied by Ashley Creek, while the land farther east at Brush Creek and Jensen were irrigated from canals and ditches taken out of Brush Creek. Dry Fork Creek provided water to the Dry Fork area, Mosby, and Deep Creek. West side and southern communities received irrigation water from Lake Fork, the Whiterocks River (which flows into the Uinta River), the Uinta River, Dry Gulch, and the Duchesne River. Also, by 1928, 800 miles of canals had been constructed on the Indian reservation by the federal government.[15]

The Ashley Valley settlers began the development of water facilities within the county to extend the farmlands from the majestic Uinta Mountains to the Ouray bottomlands. Other canals later were constructed on the west side of the county, and many irrigation companies have been formed to assure the maximum use of the irrigation waters.

In addition to the traditional diversion methods, waterwheels were used to obtain water from the Green River for irrigation in Jensen. In 1891 George Langston, Frank Goodman, and Napoleon Lebeau built a large waterwheel in the Green River near the old Indian ford (Escalante Crossing). This water was expected to irrigate more than 100 acres. In 1892 Lebeau was concerned about some driftwood that was coming down the river which he was afraid might take out the waterwheel. He was checking the situation when he slipped, striking his head on a pole, and fell into the churning water below. While his helpless wife watched, he bobbed to the surface a few times and was never seen again.

In January 1906 George A. Slaugh became interested in pumping water out of the Green River at his ranch. He went to the town of Green River, Utah, to inspect that area's irrigation system and to study fruit-growing methods. He saw the potential to use the same method in Jensen, and that summer he built a waterwheel on the Green River to lift water out of the river. The wheel was twenty-nine



Waterwheel along the Green River at Thorne Ranch in Jensen. (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne collection)

feet in diameter with an eleven-foot face. It contained sixty-six spokes and twenty-two paddles, each paddle being four feet wide. Between the spokes were twenty-eight galvanized buckets to carry the water up the wheel. The wheel made two revolutions a minute, delivering the contents of the buckets into a trough. At each revolution it emptied 280 gallons of water, for a total of 560 gallons per minute.[16]

Other waterwheels along the Green River were eventually located at the Thorne Ranch north of Jensen and at William S. Powell's ranch across the river and south of Jensen. Two were made of wood and one was made of metal. Threats to the waterwheels included ice jams and high water bringing driftwood. An ice jam took the Powell waterwheel out. Waterwheels eventually proved too costly and were abandoned. Today huge pumps take the place of waterwheels on the Green River, but threats of damage from high water are still present.

When the Uintah Indian Reservation was opened to white people for homesteading in 1905, settlers flocked to the area in droves. Many filed on land and then returned home to places all over the western United States. Some homesteaders never even looked into the water

situation, as the developers had told them plenty of water was available. This condition had been anticipated by several of the locating companies, particularly the Wasatch Development Company. In order that their prospective clients might not lose water rights, these locating companies filed upon large quantities of the water of the reservation streams. Also, private individuals who were financially able to do so made large filings upon the reservation waters. Indian agent Captain C.G. Hall, acting on behalf of the Indians, was among the first to file upon the waters of the Duchesne, Lake Fork, and Uinta rivers.

When this situation was made known to the homesteaders, a meeting was called and the Settler's Protective Association was organized on 9 September 1905. This was a big stepping-stone to the organization of irrigation companies upon former reservation land. A meeting was then held in Vernal in November with all the locating companies represented. That same night the settlers of the Dry Gulch, Lake Fork, and Uintah districts held a meeting to form a water company. The government was also disposed to cooperate with the settlers in constructing irrigation canals. At a follow-up meeting held at Vernal on 11 November 1905 the articles of incorporation of the new Dry Gulch Irrigation Company were adopted. The combined district embraced all territory between Lake Fork and the Uinta River. It was capitalized at $80,000, divided into one dollar shares, each share supposed to cover an acre of land. Officers elected were R.S. Collett, J. Garnet Holmes, J.H. Harding, G.W. Fell, and George D. Merkley, with N.J. Meagher, treasurer. The water filings of the Wasatch Development Company as well as those of N.J. Meagher and many others were assigned to the new company. The actual incorporation papers were filed on 4 December 1905.

The story of the Dry Gulch Irrigation Company is an important one. It developed out of a different set of circumstances than had the irrigation ditches and canals in the eastern part of the county, being part of a larger effort to settle the Uintah Indian Reservation. It was not formed by a number of individuals or independent water users; rather, it was established as an irrigation company to aid homesteaders in developing an irrigation system. The mere size of the irrigation

company had significant impact on the development of water of the entire two-county area.

One cloud hung on the horizon: a company organized in Denver known as the Dry Gulch Homesteader's Irrigation and Improvement Association had an early water filing in the very heart of the Dry Gulch District. Under the protective wings of this company were over 500 bona fide homesteaders; however, the two companies eventually merged. The first survey of a canal from the Uinta River for the Dry Gulch Irrigation Company was made in March 1906,[17] and work began on the canals with the slogan, "Water by May 1906."

In 1924 the Dry Gulch Irrigation Company spent $35,000 for reservoirs at five lakes at the head of the Uinta River, and by 1928 the company laid claim to being among the largest mutual irrigation companies in the world, providing water for 44,058 acres of land in Uintah and Duchesne counties.[18]

Homesteaders below the Whiterocks River (which flows into the Uinta River) also had problems after filing on homesteads in 1905. The need to increase water supplies for irrigation purposes was felt by settlers in the present LaPoint-Tridell area. The Indian allotments had prior claim on the natural flow of local streams, and the settlers were forced either to leave their land or build canals. The land on both sides of the rivers had been designated as Indian grazing ground, with no provision for right-of-ways for building canals or roads. This created a problem. The settlers tried to obtain permission for right-of-ways from the government and were told an official would be sent out in the spring of 1906.

The settlers then formed the Whiterocks Irrigation Company on 13 January 1906, with thirteen stockholders. John Bates was chosen president, with J. L. McConkie and J.C. Hacking as directors. Engineer Byron O. Colton, Jr., and his assistant John C. McConkie made the survey for a canal, planning to bring water from Whiterocks Canyon to LaPoint and Tridell. When spring came and the official had not arrived, the settlers became impatient and took matters into their own hands. C.B. Bartlett was chosen as foreman and started work on the canal.

There was conflict over the water between individual Indian and white water users, each having some support from the laws of the

land for their actions. A group of homesteaders came from Vernal and started work on the canal but became very discouraged after finding nearly all the survey stakes had been pulled up by the Indians and thrown away. The men searched out enough stakes to give them the east and west boundaries, and the ground was broken up for an enterprise that was to be the lifeblood of the present community.[19]

Both the Indians and white settlers felt aggrieved and tension continued to grow. The Indians did not want the settlers building canals through the middle of their grazing lands. The white settlers had obtained their allotments in good faith and felt they deserved the right to acquire water for their lands. Nearly 1,100 white homesteaders had moved onto the newly acquired reservation allotments. The Department of the Interior was caught squarely in the middle, feeling obligated to protect Indian lands and water rights yet cognizant of the needs of white homesteaders. Patchwork solutions were eventually found, and today, even though there continues to be difficulties, a mutual working relationship exists between white and Indian water users, each using parts of the others' irrigation systems.

Congress by the 1890s recognized that individual Indian farmers would need government aid to be successful in the arid West. For the Ute people, this financial aid came shortly after the opening of the Uintah Indian Reservation in 1905. Periodically, federal appropriations were made to the Ute people for the construction of Indian canals.

The national Dawes Act and Utah State law provided ways to gain access to Indian land. The Dawes Act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to grant right-of-ways "through any lands granted to an Indian, or a tribe of Indians . . . for public use, or to condemn such lands to public uses, upon making just compensation." The Secretary of the Interior could deny white irrigators right-of-ways across Indian allotments if, in his judgment, the canals caused irreparable damage to Indian allotments or Indian water rights. Yet Utah state law granted irrigation companies the power of eminent domain "for the construction, maintenance, repair and use of necessary reservoirs, dams, water gates, canals, ditches. . . ."[20] The local Indian agent and the Department of the Interior came under intense political and legal

pressure to permit the construction of irrigation canals across Indian allotments.

Later, through the efforts of Senator George Sutherland, a right-of-way was granted the white settlers for digging irrigation canals through Indian territory on the Uintah Reservation and in some cases sharing the Indian canals which had already been built by the government. Also, Indians began to lease much of their allotted lands to white homesteaders and the settlers then had access to the Indians' water rights.[21]

Many years were spent planning, engineering, and overseeing the repair, improvement, and extension of the Whiterocks Canal, which eventually provided water not only for LaPoint and Tridell but also for Randlett and other towns to the south.

The Uinta River Irrigation Company was formed on 25 February 1905 with John T. Nichols as president. This company maintained dams, canals, reservoirs, and pipelines in the area around Gusher.

Ouray Valley Irrigation Company was formed on 10 December 1907 by Joseph A. McKee, Robert Bodily, and R.S. Collett. It was organized to file for the right to use 210 second-feet of water from the Uinta River. The capital stock value of this company was $10,000, divided into 2,000 shares. The Bullock, Brough, and Sand Wash reservoirs are used to irrigate the Ouray Valley, and part of these waters flow into Pelican Lake. The canal was thirty-five miles long.

Colorado Park Canal Company was formed on 24 December 1907 by Orlando Bracken, J.P. Jensen, Arthur L. Grey, Ira Bryant, John H. Evans, and Enoch O. Lybbert. This canal, first called Grey Ditch, was built by a group of Colorado homesteaders. It was taken out of the Uinta River above Fort Duchesne and flowed down into Ouray Valley.[22] In 1937 the Ouray Valley and Colorado Park canal companies were consolidated as the Ouray Park Irrigation Company. The Cliff Lake and Whiterocks reservoirs were constructed by the Ouray Park Irrigation Company. Released water goes into the Whiterocks River and is then diverted to the Ouray Park canal system.

The Randlett Irrigation Company was formed on 10 June 1908 for the purpose of using Uinta River waters for irrigation, storage, and domestic needs. The first officers of the company were O.H.

Bracken, president, and H.T. Moore, secretary-treasurer. The capital stock of this company was 1,000 shares at five dollars each.

Big Six Irrigation Company was formed at Leeton on 3 January 1906, claiming water from the Uinta River branch of the Green River system. The cash value of this company was $4,000, with 1,200 shares offered. The first officers were T.S. Gunn, president; M.B. Peterson, vice-president; John N. Cool, treasurer; and Leslie O'Daiseall, secretary.

Most of the land on Diamond Mountain is dry farmed, but in 1894 Charles Ward and the Christensen brothers built a large reservoir at the head of Pot Creek which was one-half mile wide by three-fourths mile long; its water averaged ten feet deep. The 100-foot-long dam had a solid front of masonry and was twenty-five feet high and sixty feet wide at the bottom. The dam cost $700 to build, and it was estimated that from this stored water 2,000 acres could be irrigated.[23] A ditch was taken out of Pot Creek and ran through Crouse Canyon to irrigate land at the Park Livestock Ranch in Brown's Park. Stanley Crouse had Fred Feltch build the Crouse Reservoir to store the water near the top of Diamond Mountain. When Zelph S. Calder built Calder Pond on the mountain, he had to let a certain portion of water go to Crouse Reservoir, which had prior rights.

Reservoirs

Irrigators soon learned they must allow for heavy spring runoffs which could deplete the water supply to such an extent that sufficient water for irrigation late in the summer was not available. Therefore, reservoirs for water storage came into existence almost as soon as did canals. In March 1889 the presidents of the Upper and Central Irrigation companies presented a petition to the county court signed by citizens of Uintah County asking for a meeting to organize a company to bring water for irrigation from the lakes at the head of Ashley Creek and Dry Fork. The petition was granted.

Homesteaders also began to develop reservoirs in the mountains for storage of water. Some of the first to be developed were Brown Lake on the Lake Fork drainage and Duck Lake, Timothy Lake, and Farmers Lake on the Yellowstone River. At first the settlers were inclined to take the easiest way by merely lowering the river channels

to drain existing lakes. The first attempt to bring more water down in the 1890s created problems. Some of the settlers went to the mountain and set about lowering the outlets or natural dams of the mountain lakes in hopes of increasing the natural stream flow; however, this lowered the water table and actually made less water available late in the summer when irrigation water was most needed.

The settlers then began trying to build dams. Rocks, logs, and dirt were used, and some crude structures were installed at the outlet of some of the lakes, including Ashley Twin Lakes and Hacking Lake. The first dams at Twin Lakes were constructed by Lycurgus Johnson, James Hacking, and a crew of men. A small dam was built at the Dry Fork Twin Lakes, and the Ashley Twin Lakes also had a small impoundment. A reservoir also was built at Long Park with an outlet at Hacking Lake to provide storage for Ashley Valley. Eventually, with the concurrence of the state engineer, filings were approved only when dams and additional storage were needed.[24] By 1912 the settlers had gained much experience and knowledge about water conservation, and, with a special-use permit, men went to work on East Park Reservoir, which was completed in 1917.

With the drought of 1919, the need for more irrigation water in Ashley Valley became apparent. A request was made to the Utah State Agricultural College for assistance. Special emphasis was given to the need for increasing the water supply either through the construction of storage reservoirs or by improvement of the existing irrigation methods and systems. Water-storage investigations were carried on under the direction of O.W. Israelson of the Utah Agricultural Experiment Station from 1919 to 1923. A test reservoir was constructed at Twin Lakes; from this reservoir 107 acre-feet of impounded water was turned into the channel of Ashley Creek on 22 September 1922. Measurements taken at the reservoir and at the mouth of Ashley Canyon showed that ninety-four acre-feet of this water found its way into the canals of Ashley Valley. After much study, the Agricultural College suggested ways in which water could be saved by using different irrigation methods.[25]

In 1919 improved structures were also undertaken at Goose Lakes. In 1934 permits were issued for Long Park and Oaks Park (Buck Pasture) reservoirs. Long Park was completed by 1939. In 1940

an appropriation of $49,214 was made to complete the Oaks Park Reservoir.

In order to ensure an improved water supply for the Whiterocks Irrigation Company, a reservoir was built in Paradise Park to capture melting snow in the mountains. Later another reservoir was built higher on the mountain where four lakes—Chipeta, Wigwam, Moccasin, and Papoose—are located. The largest lake is Chipeta and from it the Chipeta Reservoir was named. It was completed on 2 May 1942. The government loaned the company money to complete the work on these reservoirs.

Other dams also have been constructed to ensure storage of water—perhaps the county's most valuable resource.

Water Rights and Issues

Many legal problems have resulted over the use of water. The problem of too many users for too little water, the questions of prior use and conflicting claims, and the questions of Indian water rights and state and federal use of water are all relevant issues in Uintah County. Legal issues relating to water rights have been tested many times in Uintah County courts. The Utah territorial legislature of 1852 granted the county courts the control of water privileges and the control of distribution of water for irrigation and other purposes. Before Uintah County was formed in 1880, local irrigation water rights had to be appropriated through the county court in Heber, Wasatch County. When Uintah County was created, new laws had been passed and the territorial legislature had provided that waters were private property when appropriated. This change in the theory of water rights presented numerous problems to be decided by county authorities. On 20 February 1880 the legislature established the selectmen of the county as ex officio water commissioners. This provision of the legislature created by statute the office of water commissioner, with authority to decide private water rights and other problems incident to such an office. The Uintah County Court then had the authority to make water appropriations, decisions, and allotments. Early laws defined the role of the courts in controlling water for public interest and establishing the irrigation-district system.

The first water record found in Uintah County Court minutes

was on 3 January 1881 when a petition was presented by Isaac Burton and P. Smith for half of all the water in Brush Creek to be set apart for their use and benefit. It was granted. Then Isaac Burton, Sr., and Isaac Burton, Jr., were given half interest in the remaining half of the water in Brush Creek and George Bankhead was granted the remaining water in the creek.

In 1891 canal companies were instructed by the court to conserve water by constructing flumes and headgates across the natural water channels at the heads of the canals and ditches. The flumes and headgates were to be completed by the 1 April 1892 at the expense of the individuals or companies.[26]

On 11 July 1892 a group of people with water complaints came to the county court meeting. Judge Isaac Burton, Sr., and the selectmen adjourned the meeting long enough to go to Ashley Creek and make a division of water between the Central and Rock Point canal companies and the people living along Ashley Creek.

In 1893 more complaints and threatened lawsuits were brought to the county court, and the selectmen again divided the waters of Ashley Creek into each of the canals to the best of their ability. The clerk notified the officers of the canal companies taking water from the natural channel of Ashley Creek to meet with the county court on 9 September 1893 at the courthouse. County Attorney W.C. Britt stated that the object of the meeting was to divide the waters of Ashley Creek agreeably to save trouble and lawsuits in the future. The law was read regarding water certificates. At that meeting the Upper Irrigation Company was given one-third of the water of Ashley Creek, less one-third of S.D. Colton's accrued water right. Rock Point Canal Company was issued a certificate for one-sixth of the water, with the exception of one-sixth of S.D. Colton's accrued water right. The settlers along North Ashley Creek were issued a certificate for one-twelfth of the water less one-twelfth of Colton's accrued water right, as were also Isaac Burton and B.O. Colton. Central Irrigation company was issued a certificate for one-third of the waters of Ashley Creek less one-third of S.D. Colton's right. All were instructed to put in weirs and headgates by 1 December 1893.[27]

Many water feuds still erupted, however, including physical fights on the ditch banks, because someone was caught stealing another's

water. Battles are still being fought over the water at present in courts and on ditch banks. The 1893 county court division of the water did not settle the problems. Finally the issue was taken to court again by a group led by Ebenezer G. DeFriez. The court once again divided the waters of Ashley Creek in what became known as the "Dusenberry Decree," signed by Judge Warren N. Dusenberry on 17 November 1897. The division was intricate and complicated, and the seep water was also allocated at the time.[28]

When Utah became a state in 1896, changes were made and county courts no longer handled water appropriations. Instead, a water commissioner and various watermasters were appointed. In 1901 the board of county commissioners was required to create one or more water districts in the county and appoint water commissioners. By 1903 the law was again changed, and a state engineer was appointed and required to create water divisions. The state engineer's office makes all water decisions and allocations at present.

Government Water Projects

The cost of the development of natural resources including irrigation was met at the local level until the turn of the century. Since that time the government has become involved in the management of the water resources through the Bureau of Reclamation. Studies began as early as 1889 by a special committee on irrigation, and the first National Irrigation Congress met in Salt Lake City in 1891. Irrigation projects were also undertaken by the government to provide water for the Ute Indians.

The Ute Indians also found it difficult to grow crops without irrigation water. The local Mormon church tried to give the Utes assistance. In 1883 the church called Thomas Karren, Jeremiah Hatch, Sr., Israel J. Clark, and Jeremiah Hatch, Jr., as missionaries to assist the Utes in the construction of a canal over a mile in length about fifteen miles downstream from Fort Duchesne on the Uinta River. This canal proved to be a success, unlike a three-mile canal between the Green and the White rivers built earlier by Indian agents who were unfamiliar with irrigation methods. By 1892 a substantial Indian settlement was using the missionaries' canal.

Congressional funding built three more irrigation canals for the

Utes in the early 1890s—one diverted water from the Uinta River, a second diverted water from Dry Gulch, and a third took water from the Duchesne River and irrigated the reservation area around Randlett.[29]

Additional federal funding for Indian farmers came following the opening of the Uintah Indian Reservation in 1905. Congress authorized $600,000 for the Uintah Irrigation Project, which was directed by a new nationwide Indian reclamation agency—the Indian Irrigation Service. Congress assumed that the Ute allottees would reimburse the government for this appropriation from revenues received from the sale of their lands and profits earned from the sale of crops over the next thirty years. Many Utes were not supportive of this federal action, in part because a key element to this federally funded reclamation project was that non-Indians were granted access to the Indian canals to deliver water to their thirsty farms. The first canal built under the Uintah Irrigation Project was the Whiterocks Canal, followed by the Farm Creek, Deep Creek, and Uintah canals.

By 1908 some $330,000 had been spent on the project, which created many irrigation construction jobs which went mostly to white homesteaders. It was difficult for the Bureau of Indian Affairs to convince Utes to participate in the reclamation project with their labor. Most continued to hold to their traditional ways of hunting, fishing, raising horses, and collecting foodstuffs in season. As a result, less than a fourth of the land under the newly constructed Indian canals came under the plow of the Ute people.[30]

In 1937 in the depths of the Depression it became time for Ute property owners to pay for the services and improvements. By this time, ditches and canals had been dug, individual allotments had been leveled and plowed, and, regardless of whether the services were requested, water had been diverted onto Ute lands. Most Utes could not pay off the debts against them—which were often as much as $1,600. The reservation area itself had been reduced by 91 percent—to 360,000 acres from nearly 4,000,000 acres in 1885. A tribal business committee was formed in 1937, and it began administering tribal political and economic affairs and took the major responsibility to find funds to pay the debt.

During the period from 1937 to 1948, some of the money to pay

the debt was obtained from mineral and land leases. During the same period, allotted Utes were assessed for maintenance charges by the BIA; and they were also assessed by the state for irrigation water whether or not the allottee farmed during the period. It was stipulated that landowners who did not pay off irrigation-project debts could not work the land. This policy ran most Utes hopelessly into debt. In 1946 the Uintah and White River bands filed a suit in U.S. courts for compensation for wrongful and wasteful use of tribal trust funds in the Uintah Irrigation Project, but this grievance was not successful. The land acquisition, land subjugation, and irrigation programs basically created jobs for local whites, further developed water resources for local whites, developed Indian land so as to make it more desirable for white lessees, and gave struggling white farmers and ranchers a buyer for the land they wanted to liquidate. The tribe reacquired some land, but individual Utes had little capital with which to develop or acquire the land.

It was not until 1956 that a Ute family plan was instituted which directly awarded per capita payments to Utes from tribal money. Deposited payments were placed in accounts administered by Ute Tribal Family Plan officers and BIA personnel. Through this family plan, the BIA was able to make payments on the old debts of the Uintah Irrigation Project.[31]

The government began to develop other water projects in Utah such as the Strawberry River Project in central Utah in 1905. At the end of World War I, the Colorado River Storage Project came into being. Secretary Franklin Lane of the Department of the Interior wrote a letter to Utah governor Simon Bamberger in 1918 stating that more than a million soldiers had been drawn from U.S. farms and an equal number should return at the close of the war. Improved irrigation programs were needed to encourage them to return to farming, and the acreage to be reclaimed in Utah under this project would be from 600,000 to 800,000 acres. Representative L. W. Curry from Vernal was appointed a member of a committee to work on the project. State officials began looking at various reservoir sites and irrigation projects around the state. In Uintah County there was much discussion about where dams should be placed. Some felt it would be

better to place them on larger streams that empty into the Green River and also to have a large dam on the Green River.

The Colorado River Storage Project was a plan to develop the water resources of the Colorado River Basin for irrigation, power production, flood- and silt-control, and other beneficial uses in the states of Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. In 1922 the Colorado River Compact divided the Colorado River Drainage into upper and lower basins, and it also specified the amount of water the Upper Basin was required to deliver to the Lower Basin. The Upper Basin Colorado River Compact of 1948 stipulated the amount of water that each state—Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico and Utah—could use for its future projects and present needs. Projects that would affect Uintah County were outlined, including the Vernal Unit, the Jensen Project, Echo Park Dam, and Split Mountain Dam. The Vernal Unit-Steinaker Reservoir and the Jensen Unit-Tyzack (Red Fleet) Reservoir also were participating units of the Central Utah Project's initial phase.

The Central Utah Project (CUP) is a Bureau of Reclamation project designed to meet the water needs of the people of the state of Utah by developing Utah's share of Colorado River water. This water would help meet irrigation, municipal, and industrial requirements both in the Uinta Basin and along the Wasatch Front. To assure a dependable water supply, large storage dams such as Flaming Gorge and Glen Canyon dams have been built on the upper Colorado River. Under the Colorado River Storage Project Act of 1956, four units of the Central Utah Project—the Vernal, the Bonneville, the Jensen, and the Upalco—were authorized for construction. The Colorado River Basin Project Act of 1968 authorized construction of a fifth unit, the Uintah, and a feasibility study of a sixth, the Ute Indian Unit. The Vernal Unit was completed in 1962 and provides municipal water to Vernal, Maeser, Naples, and Ashley Valley, as well as supplemental irrigation water to 15,000 acres in the Ashley Valley. The Jensen Unit provides additional water for municipal and industrial use in the Ashley Valley and supplemental irrigation water to 4,000 acres near Jensen. The Uintah Unit would provide irrigation water for Indian and non-Indian land in the Uinta River Valley and water for municipal and industrial uses.

The CUP initial phase as authorized by Congress included diverting water from the Uinta Basin to the Bonneville Basin. This water would drop from Strawberry Reservoir through a series of hydroelectric power plants. The water and power would be used for irrigation, recreation, municipal, and industrial purposes. Starvation Reservoir was to be built to replace and furnish additional high-quality water to the Uinta Basin. Strawberry Reservoir was to be enlarged and would serve to regulate this basin-to-basin diversion of water. The Bonneville Unit would produce enough kilowatt hours of electricity to supply a city of 100,000 people for a year. By resolution dated 5 December 1977 the Uintah and Ouray Tribal Council requested that Leland Bench development be included in the Bonneville Unit. The Bureau of Reclamation could acquire land on Leland Bench for the Ute Indian Tribe and pump irrigation water from the Green River at Ouray up onto the bench. Drains would be installed to prevent the build-up of salts in the upper soil levels. Boating and fishing potential would be greatly increased and the muddy Green River below Flaming Gorge Dam would be transformed into a good clearwater stream for fishing.

A CUP board was established including members from each participating county. The three members from Uintah County were L.Y. Siddoway, manager of the Uintah Conservancy District; Briant H. Stringham; and H. LeRoy Morrill.

Three proposed dams were never built. Dead Man Bench Dam would have been constructed on the Yampa River, twenty-four miles west of Craig, Colorado, to provide water to lands on Dead Man Bench southeast of Vernal between the Yampa and White rivers. Split Mountain Dam would have been built at the head of Split Mountain Canyon on the Green River and would have backed water through Island, Rainbow, and Little parks to the third proposed dam at Echo Park. Echo Park Dam, to be located 3.5 miles downstream from the confluence of the Green and Yampa rivers in Colorado, two miles east of the Utah state line, would have created a reservoir that extended up the Green River sixty-four miles to Red Canyon and forty-four miles up the Yampa River to Lily Park. An insurmountable obstacle to the construction of both the Split Mountain and Echo Park projects was that the proposed dam sites were located inside Dinosaur

National Monument. In Uintah County defeat of the project was a bitter blow to many after over twenty years of work and expense. It was not easy for diehard supporters to accept the idea that Echo Park Dam would not be constructed; but it was a victory for the Sierra Club and other project opponents. Also, a proposed Green River pumping project was talked about but never planned. This project proposed pumping water from the Green River with lifts of about forty feet which could irrigate 11,000 acres of dry land and 1,000 acres of irrigated land between Jensen and Ouray.

Flaming Gorge Dam was the largest project undertaken on the Green River. It was first proposed by Utah Senator Reed Smoot in 1930 when he introduced a bill providing for the construction of a hydroelectric power project at Flaming Gorge. The project did not become a reality until 1956 when President Dwight Eisenhower approved a $760-million legislative act; funds were appropriated in 1958. The first bucket of concrete was poured on 8 September 1960. When completed, the dam towered 502 feet above bedrock and 455 feet above the original river channel. At full capacity, the reservoir is 436 feet deep and holds about 3.8 million acre-feet of water within its 375 miles of shoreline. Total cost for the project was $65.3 million, with $49.6 million for the dam and reservoir and $15.7 million for the power plant and switchyard.

On 27 September 1963, two months before his death, President John F. Kennedy turned the switch which activated the first generator to go into operation at Flaming Gorge Dam. First lady Lady Bird Johnson arrived in Vernal on 24 August 1964 to dedicate Flaming Gorge Dam, and in 1968 President Lyndon Johnson signed a bill establishing the Flaming Gorge Recreation Area, which included more than 200,000 acres of land and water in Utah and Wyoming.[32]

As part of the Vernal Project, a dam was built in Steinaker Draw to store water from Ashley Creek. Steinaker Reservoir, with its 34,000-acre-feet capacity, provides a supplemental water supply to 22,300 acres of cultivated land near Vernal. In addition to the dam, a feeder canal and a service canal also were built. In August 1958 when word was received that the $1 million appropriated for Steinaker Reservoir had been released a giant celebration was held. Steinaker Dam was

completed in 1961 and work began on the feeder canal, which gave the construction crews many problems.

The appearance of a hole thirteen feet in diameter on the north end of Steinaker Dam in 1966 did not threaten the safety of the dam, according to authorities, but it did threaten the peace of mind of people who lived below the dam. That problem was solved in 1990 when it was decided that the dam needed a $12.5-million reinforcement project which would prevent the dam from breaking in the event of an earthquake. The project was delayed for a year due to an ancient Indian graveyard being found while drilling test sites. Construction began in August 1993, but slippage was discovered by a Soil Conservation Service engineer when the dam was being refilled. The lake was drained during the summer of 1994, which caused a terrific hardship on area farmers who lost their irrigation water and had to rely on the spring runoff. After the lake was drained, the extent of the slippage was determined and the damage was repaired.

The Jensen Project Red Fleet Dam on Big Brush Creek was originally planned to store 6,000 acre-feet of water; however, because of increasing municipal and industrial needs, it was enlarged to 26,000 acre-feet. The site was moved downstream in order that a much larger dam could be constructed. The project provided sufficient storage to supply 3,600 acres of irrigated land with additional water and 800 acres near Jensen with the necessary water to irrigate.

In 1970 it was announced that the Jensen Unit of the Central Utah Project was included in the 1971 budget to be sent to Congress by President Richard Nixon. Construction of the dam began in 1977 and the 145-foot-high, 1,640-foot-long earth-filled embankment was completed in 1980. Work included flood control, recreational facilities, and drainage ditches in the agricultural area to be served. The reservoir was first named in honor of the Tyzack family—Adair, Ed, and Herbert—who owned the property where the dam was to be built. The name was later changed to the more dramatic Red Fleet Reservoir because of the red cliffs in the area resembling a fleet of ships.[33]

Ute Indian reservation water rights were also included in the CUP project. In September 1965 the United States and the Ute Indian

Tribe entered into an agreement in which the tribe relinquished its claims to reserved water rights on Rock Creek, thus freeing up approximately 60,000 acre-feet of water to be diverted and stored as a part of the Bonneville Unit. In exchange, the U.S. committed to use its best efforts to construct the Upalco Unit and the Uintah Unit for the Indians. These projects were intended to supply approximately 30,000 acres of new irrigable land to the Ute Tribe. The CUP went forward, but the Ute Indian projects were never built.

In 1994 the tribal council presented a bill to the Central Utah Water Conservancy District for $33 million for the "unauthorized diversion" of tribal water "pending resolution of the tribe's water rights claims." Until the water compact is ratified, tribal leaders maintain that the conservancy district does not have a contract for the water it is diverting from the reservation. The water question is also connected to a tribal dispute with the state of Utah over 2.9 million acres of land within the boundaries of the reservation. The tribal council has considered leasing water to California and other states in the lower basin of the Colorado River.

The dams completed as part of the Colorado River Project have provided late-season irrigation water which was not available before and have opened new areas for agriculture. The story of water development has been a major theme in Uintah County's history during the past century. Efforts to settle unresolved issues, especially those relating to the Ute Tribe's water rights, will likely continue into the next century.

Culinary Water

The first people in Uintah County settled along the area's creeks and rivers, which provided a source of culinary water as well as irrigation water. Some were fortunate enough to have a spring nearby which provided drinking water; others dug wells. The first settlers had an eye to the future and were concerned not only about water conservation but about contamination of drinking water. In 1896 the county court instructed the sheriff to notify owners to remove outhouses and corrals located where drainage flowed into canals or ditches used for domestic or culinary use. Owners who did not comply with this notice were prosecuted.[34] Keeping children from play-



Early wooden irrigation ditch built along Vernal's Main street. (UCLRHC collection)

ing or swimming in the cool ditches in the summertime became a problem for the ditch riders.

When the fort was built where Vernal now stands, a well was dug; but it could not be dug deep enough to obtain water, so water was hauled from a spring at 285 West 500 North or from the creek on 500 South. In 1880 the Central Canal was built; it carried water from Ashley Creek through town. In April 1908 the city council decided to line this ditch with wooden sidewalls. Most of the top was covered over with boards and bridges. Cleanouts were installed along the way and sticks were placed in the cleanouts to keep trash from clogging the wooden trench.

In October 1908 it was decided to build a drainage ditch to the east which would be uncovered and up to five feet deep.[35] That year was also the beginning of the Vernal City culinary water system. People would be able to have water piped into their homes for drinking and bathing; but to do this Vernal would lose its status as a city without taxation. The first tax was levied at eight mills on the dollar of assessed valuation of property; five mills would go for drainage purposes and three mills for a water system. It was estimated that this

tax would generate $12,000 for the water system. This would not be enough to build the system, estimated to cost about $30,750, but would be enough to make a good start. It was not until 1910, however, that the contract was let for the pipe for the system. The wooden pipe was of Oregon fir wound with wire, made by the Washington Pipe & Foundry Company of Tacoma. Cast-iron pipe had been considered but was not feasible due to the high cost of freight. The trenches began with twenty-five men working at about two dollars per day. After a month of digging, trench diggers went on strike for a twenty-five-cent raise but were unsuccessful in their demands. It was stated in the *Vernal Express* on 22 April 1910 that the lines were installed on three streets, from Second East up First North, up Uintah Avenue (Main Street), and up First South street to the city limits; then another connection was made and the line went west up Uintah (Main) across the Central Canal, thence north to George Merkley's corner, thence northwest to the canal just above the intake of the old millrace.

Plans were discussed to extend the water mains into the canyon to pipe the water directly from the springs there. For the time being, however, it was felt that water from the canal could be kept reasonably pure and would be much better than the previous source of water, the open ditch. Investigation showed these hopes to be erroneous, however, as several sources of pollution along the canal were discovered including a hog pasture containing fifty-seven hogs with wallows along the bank and two dead hogs lying in the ditch, a cattle corral built across the canal, and several dead animals along the canal bank. The most unusual thing found was a hen roost built over the canal in such a way that the place would always be clean of droppings. Some farms above the canal had no drain ditches, so all their drainage was going into the canal. Some of the people above the canal did not care what the people below them drank as long as their own water was good. The county commissioners and sheriff were called in to handle the health situation. Convincing some residents to remove these unsanitary conditions continued to be a problem the next few years. It was believed in 1911 that this contamination was polluting the water and was to blame for the local prevalence of typhoid fever. Since people were not following the commissioners'

orders to clean up, county health officer Dr. G.B.M. Bower and his committee of Sheriff Richard Pope and George L. Goodrich stepped in to inspect the waterway and enforce laws regulating pollution.[36]

After the initial system was completed in 1910, lines were expanded out from the city limits to connect other properties with the system. In 1917 wooden pipe was added to the ditch from the Red Planer Mill on 500 West to connect with the pipe at 100 West. In 1917 a bond election was passed in favor of continuing the Vernal water system in Ashley Canyon to a point a mile above the mouth of Spring Creek. In May work began on installing redwood pipe in the Main Street lateral. A settling reservoir was built, and it was felt that the reservoir and the new pipeline would eliminate the red (dirty) water coming down the Vernal line. Gilsonite was placed around the galvanized-wire wrapping of the pipe to protect it. By 1920 it was decided to continue the line farther up the canyon and to put in a new cement settling tank.

In 1931 Vernal officials filed on the big spring in Ashley Canyon and changed the point of diversion to this spring, which would ensure a pure supply of water all year round. The old wooden pipe had deteriorated to the point that a big truck driving down Main Street broke through it at one point. In 1931 the city decided that cast-iron pipe would solve the problem of high repair costs on the wood pipeline, whose upkeep was becoming higher than the cost of interest on a bond issue to replace it with cast-iron pipe. Also bacteria was contaminating the water through the leaks in the wooden pipe.

By bringing the pipeline directly out of the Ashley spring, the water would never see daylight until it came out of a water tap, and Vernal would have perhaps the purest water in the state of Utah. The first phase of work, replacing some of the six-inch wood pipe in Vernal City limits with two-inch cast-iron pipe, began in November 1931.

It also was decided to change the main route of the line; but those living along the old route were not happy because lines would have to be run from the new main line to their homes at their expense. Replacement construction of all the wooden pipelines and mains within Vernal city limits occupied the summer of 1932 and

continued in 1933. The old wooden stave pipe was purchased by a group of LaPoint and Deep Creek farmers who used the sections for irrigation purposes. The city had trouble selling bonds to raise enough money to take the main pipeline up the canyon; however, the replacement of the wooden pipeline through Vernal City with a cast-iron line was completed in 1935.

Money finally became available to complete the water system through the federal projects that were part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal. In 1935 it was decided to use twelve-inch cement pipe above the settling plant and for the flow line. A line was installed from 2980 West 1500 North and ran to the two cement storage tanks in the lower end of the field one-half mile east of Maeser School and three miles north of Vernal. The large tank was constructed above ground and the smaller tank partly above ground. The water ran from here in a twelve-inch cast-iron pipe to the intersection of Main Street and 500 West where it was connected by an eight-inch tee to a six-inch cast-iron line, which ran east on Main Street. The parallel and cross lines in Vernal which branched out from this main line were of four-inch cast-iron pipe. A water fountain was installed at the Calder Creamery at 760 North Vernal Avenue so people buying ice cream could sit in the shade and eat it with water available. Two drinking fountains were also installed in the center of Vernal by the Lions' Club in May 1935. One was located on the corner in front of the Bank of Vernal, the other in front of the Uintah State Bank.

By 1941 work on the line to Ashley Springs was well underway and included the improvement of Ashley Springs and a 500,000-gallon storage tank. A twelve-inch steel pipeline was installed under the Upper Canal to carry the water to the concrete tank. This steel pipe took a little different route than the cement tank. Work on the project was accomplished with the aid of WPA funds. When the project was completed, Vernal's water system was valued at over $100,000. Vernal's sewer system was also begun with federal funds and WPA workers.

In July 1935 Maeser town incorporation was approved by the county commissioners. In 1936 the town of Maeser secured a WPA loan of $20,000 for a waterworks system.

Many residents living in Uintah County were too far removed to use the water system, so wells had to be dug or water hauled from springs or canals. Water was hauled to fill cisterns, which were sometimes buried underground or had devices to collect rainwater. The Moffat Canal provided the only culinary water for that area. It, like all new canals, had banks which were not settled or sodded with grass. Consequently, breaks occurred in the canal after storms. This was especially true of a long wooden flume northeast of Moffat which would be clogged with tumbleweeds after a wind storm. The ditch company eventually hired men to cut through rock and soil to eliminate this problem. The cut was fifty feet deep and about 250 feet long and took more than two years to finish. Before this the only way the settlers could use the water for laundering clothes was to fasten a split-open cactus on a stick and stir the water until it became clear enough to use.[37]

Despite these problems, other county residents looked at the successful establishment of water systems in Vernal and Maeser and sought to build their own systems. Tridell Farmstead Water System was organized in 1946; by-laws were compiled and witnessed on 4 May 1946. The system was set up for a fifty-family unit and was originally intended for the middle and west dells. Some people were not initially interested, but after the work was underway the east dell also wanted to join the system, so the line was extended there and also to the Loren McKee dairy in the valley directly west of Twin Peaks.

A federal loan for $32,000 for building the water system was obtained and bids for the pipe-laying project were opened in Vernal on 14 November 1947. Davis Morrill donated the land on which were constructed the buildings for the chlorination and storage tanks. Local people who worked on laying the waterlines were paid one dollar an hour.[38]

The Tridell-LaPoint water system later came about because of the need for a new water system for both communities. The old Tridell Farmstead Water System had become overloaded and worn out. LaPoint had a newer system but needed a more adequate supply of water for community growth. Because of the high cost of putting in a new system, the two communities decided to consolidate their efforts. The Tridell-Lapoint Water District was formed under the

direction of the Uintah County commissioners with Loris Woolley, chairman; DeVon McKee, vice-chairman; Marvin Huber, Duane McKee, and Clinton Harrison, directors; and Clora Whitehead, secretary. After several years of planning and investigation by the water board, work commenced. Federal grants of approximately $750,000 were obtained for the project. The estimated cost of the new system was $1.2 million. Construction started in the spring of 1978. New lines were installed, a new treatment plant was built, and a diversion structure was constructed to divert water out of the canal. Construction was completed in the fall of 1979 with 285 connections. This new water system was one of the most modern water systems in the state of Utah.[39]

The Ute Tribe has operated a centralized raw-water production, storage, and distribution system since July 1969. It provides significant quantities of culinary and potable water to the Indian and non-Indian communities on the reservation.[40]

Vernal City had begun its water system in the 1920s, and by 1947 a water line had been taken from Vernal City's line to Naples and Davis. In 1959, when Steinaker Dam was completed, money became available from the government for water projects and a valleywide water system was started. All local areas had their representatives under the Uintah Water Conservancy District, and Vernal City acted as the trustee. Vernal Unit CUP money helped to develop lines to rural areas of the valley.

In 1979 four water districts—Ashley Valley Water and Sewer Improvement District, Maeser Water Improvement District, Ashley Water Company, and Vernal City Corporation—were divided out of the valley's water system. The people of Ashley Valley met and decided which areas should be served by each new district. Besides serving the Vernal City area, Vernal City Corporation also serves the Ashley Water Company on a contract basis. The Ashley Springs Water Treatment Plant, built by the Ashley Water and Sewer Improvement District, came on line in 1985. In 1986 the Jensen Water and Sewer Improvement District contracted with the Ashley Valley and the Maeser districts to acquire water from the Ashley Springs treatment plant. Jensen Water and Sewer Improvement District was formed separately from the Ashley valleywide water system in 1974.[41]

In 1985 the Maeser Water Improvement District agreed to share the cost of running the Ashley Springs Water Treatment Plant with the Ashley Water and Sewer Improvement District and in doing so also shared the spring water. In 1984 Vernal City had contracted with the U. S. Bureau of Reclamation to build a water treatment plant at Doc's Beach. This plant treats water from Ashley Springs and from Red Fleet Reservoir.

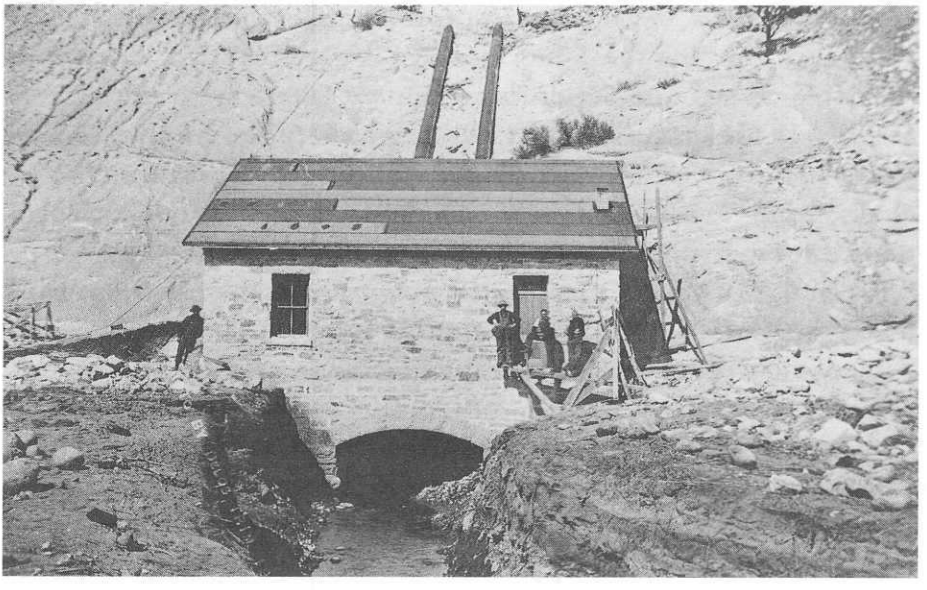
The Ashley Valley Sewer Management Board announced in 1979 that a valleywide sewer system would be jointly built by Vernal City, Ashley Valley Water and Sewer Improvement District, and the Maeser Water Improvement District, with a sewer lagoon system about 3.5 miles east of Naples. At the present time, the sewer system includes some of the Davis and Glines areas and most of the Naples, Vernal City, and Maeser areas as well as a small portion of the Ashley area.

The valleywide sewer system was estimated to cost some $7.2 million. The estimated connections, not including those of Vernal City, was approximately 1,500 connections. Of the estimated $7.2 million cost, some estimated $1.5 million was from connection fees, $2.7 million from bond elections, and the Environmental Protection Agency granted $3 million toward the construction of the valleywide sewer system and the sewer lagoon treatment site.[42]

Power Plants

Water is also used to generate power. The county's first power plant was built in 1908 by the Vernal Milling & Light Company. It was located in Ashley Canyon, with Ashley Creek as the source of water to generate the power. Men with teams and plows worked under the supervision of Frank Siddoway. Frank and his wife, Ellen Young, lived at the plant and operated it for ten years. In 1908 the first electric lights were connected in Vernal. This company furnished power to area residents until 1925 when Utah Power & Light Company took over the operation.

In 1938 when the valley needed more power than the Ashley plant could provide, the Utah Power & Light auxiliary generating plant was established on North Vernal Avenue at 500 North. Power was generated by a diesel plant, which provided the valley's electricity until the mid-1960s, when all the power for the valley was provided



Ashley Canyon power plant in 1908. (UCLRHC collection)

by the Castle Gate Power Plant at the mouth of Indian Canyon, which generates power with coal. Utah Power and Light Company served 8,450 customers at the beginning of 1995, 150 more than were served at the peak of the oil boom. Some major changes will transpire in the next few years in which first big industry, then commercial businesses, and finally residents may be able to choose which power company to purchase power from, much as residents now do with long-distance telephone service. At present, all power provided by Utah Power and Light for this valley comes from the Castle Gate Plant.

Tridell and Lapoint received power for the first time in February 1940 from Moon Lake Electric Company, and Jensen was serviced soon after. When President Franklin Delano Roosevelt announced the government appropriation of funds to construct power lines in rural areas in 1938, Shirley K. Daniels was listening to the radio. He immediately corresponded with the Rural Electrification Administration (REA). A group of men was soon gathered to begin the organization of the new Moon Lake Electric Cooperative. During the summer of 1940 a survey and study were made, and it was established that people in the rural areas in Uintah County could be

served. At the time Moon Lake Electric Association was being organized, two similar organizations also were being incorporated. One was known as the Tabby Mountain Association and the other as the Western Uintah Electric Cooperative, with headquarters at Lapoint. It was recommended by the REA and thought advisable to consolidate these with the Moon Lake Electric Association, which was carried out on 7 April 1939. Moon Lake has since served all the rural areas.[43]

Flaming Gorge Dam and its hydroelectric power plant were completed in 1964. The water and power generated from this plant are used in states all over the West.

Beginning in 1981, it took four years to construct the $1.1-billion Deseret Generation and Transmission Cooperatives' Bonanza Power Plant. The massive power plant was completed in September 1985. The plant was then tested and placed in commercial operation in 1986. The old Staley coal mine was purchased and new Deserado Mine facilities were built to provide coal for the plant. The coal is transported to the mine on a specially constructed railroad. Water from the Green River is used for the operation. The plant supplies electricity to 30,000 consumers in Utah, Nevada, Wyoming, and Arizona, with most of the consumers being rural residents.

Water resources have been developed in Uintah County since the first settlers arrived. From the first ditches dug to the great Colorado River Project, residents have continued to look for ways to improve irrigation and to use county water resources as prudently as possible.

ENDNOTES

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3. Andrew Jenson, "Mountain Dell Ward, Uintah Stake, Manuscript History," copy located in Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 271.

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Lawrence, and Georgeanna (Curtis). Copies available in the UCL Regional History Center, folder 261.

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6. Ibid., 18 January 1945.

7. Neal Deets, personal interview with author, June 1994, copy located in UCL Regional History Center.

8. *Vernal Express,* 16 December 1969.

9. Ibid., 13 December 1928.

10. George Long, "An Early Irrigation Project in Ashley Valley," manuscript located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 208.

11. *Vernal Express,* 10 March 1906.

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13. *Vernal Express,* 29 August 1935.

14. Information provided to author by Lawrence Siddoway, former manager of Uintah Conservancy District, and by Marvin Jackson, who has worked with the water companies for years.

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16. *Vernal Express,* 6 January and 9 June 1906.

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19. *Uintah's Story* (Vernal, UT: Uintah School District, 1947), 83.

20. Craig Fuller, "Land Rush in Zion," Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1990, 282.

21. Ibid., 269–309.

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26. Uintah County Court Minutes, 10 September 1891.

27. Ibid., 20 July and 5 September 1893, Book 1, 149, 159–60.

28. A copy of the Dusenberry Decree is located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 2114. It lists the percent each individual and company was allotted.

29. *Uintah's Story*, 29. See also *Inventory of the County Archives of Utah, Uintah County*, 33

30. Joseph G. Jorgensen, *Sun Dance Religion* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1972), 147.

31. Ibid., 147–54.

32. *Vernal Express*, 26 December 1968.

33. Ibid., 5 March, 13 August, 24 September, 15 October, and 13 December 1970.

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35. *Vernal Express*, 9 October 1908.

36. Ibid., 20 October, 3 November, and 24 November, 1911.

37. See Elsie D. Jordon, *Delivered from the Bottoms* (Moab, UT: Jordon, 1980), 10.

38. Sarah Helen Harvey Simmons, "The History of Tridell, Utah," 23, unpublished manuscript, copy located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center; information was obtained from Ethel McConkie Goodrich.

39. Ibid.; Simmons received information for this segment from DeVon J. McKee.

40. See *Ute Bulletin*, 20 September 1994.

41. Information obtained by the author from Bert Pilling, Vernal City Water Department, Lawrence (Lanny) Kay of Uintah Engineering, Lawrence Siddoway, and Lyle McKeachnie.

42. Information provided to the author by Lanny Kay on 9 January 1995.

43. Moon Lake Electric Association, 1987 Annual Report, provided to author by Russell Cowan.

12

"Flower in the Crannied Wall"

Culture, Arts, and Recreation

From the earliest days of settlement to the present, culture and recreation have been important elements of life in Uintah County. Many of the early pioneer forms of recreation and entertainment—such as music, dancing, drama, hiking, horseback racing, rodeos, baseball, and swimming—continue to be a part of today's activities. More recent forms of entertainment and recreation—such as movies, skiing, river running, and golf—are also popular with residents of the county today. Recreation locations have changed from swimming in canals and ponds and dancing on open dance floors located in groves of trees to public parks, swimming pools, golf courses, and recreation complexes like Bottle Hollow Resort. Cultural activities in the county have been fostered by a variety of clubs and organizations going back at least to the Vernal Literary and Debating Society, founded in 1896. Now, a century later, numerous clubs, sororities, associations, and organizations function within Uintah County.

Recreational and Social Events

The first social events held in Ashley Valley most likely were

candy pulls, quilting bees, or house parties. Cabins built with a wooden floor often were celebrated with dances. Early fiddlers who played all over the valley were Al Workman, Peter Peterson, Jerome Remington, Lafe Winn, Mart Oakes, Winfield Hullinger, Sr., Pete Hansen, Dave Timothy, Tom Brown Vernon, and Willis Johnson. The fiddler usually had no accompaniment; some were very good while others sounded like a "fly in a beer bottle"; however, people were happy for any music and had a good time.[1] A Christmas party was held at the home of Alvah A. Hatch in 1878. Adam Coon had a fiddle with only three strings, but folks danced all evening to old tunes such as "Old Zip Coon" and "Bonnie Doon."[2]

When the first schoolhouse was completed in the fort in 1879, a Christmas dance was held in the afternoon for the children and another at night for the adults. At this all-night dance, the fiddler who provided the music was born without arms and had taught himself to play the fiddle with his toes.[3]

Dancing and celebrations held outdoors during the summer months were important social activities. Here the young people of the community could meet, and some began courting at these community social functions. Popular spots for these outdoor social occasions included John Winn's grove, located a mile northeast of Ashley Ward; Alma Rasmussen's grove, a mile east of the Naples Store; Hatch's grove in Vernal; Lars Jensen's grove in Jensen; and "The Grove" near the old Mease property at 1500 East 5000 South. These groves were stands of trees planted by the pioneers to provide shade and bring a touch of green to an otherwise barren valley. The planted trees were also a means to help secure title to the land. Wooden dance floors were constructed in most of the groves. On summer evenings bonfires provided light for the dancers and the local bands.

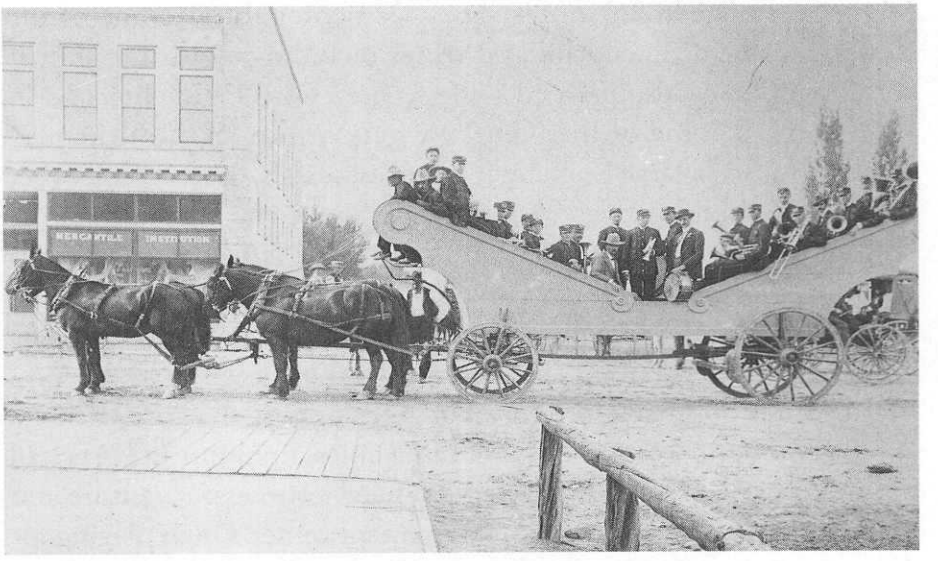
The largest celebrations were on July 4th, Independence Day, and July 24th, Utah's Pioneer Day. Celebrations were often attended by cowboys from surrounding ranches, including Red Butte Ranch on Cockleburr and K Ranch on the Utah-Colorado line. Races, often with hair ribbons as prizes for girls, fireworks, forty-gallon barrels of beer and lemonade, plenty of food, speeches, musical numbers, dancing, and relaxed visits with friends and neighbors highlighted early Uintah County celebrations.



Merry-go-round powered by threshing engine at Rasmussen Grove in 1908. (UCLRHC, Nellie Richens collection)

The transition from groves to resorts began at the Alma Rasmussen property where a children's merry-go-round, with wooden slat benches, was powered by a steam engine and operated for special celebrations. An indoor dance hall also was constructed at the property.

The first "resort" in the county was built in 1900 by Ira and Hattie Burton near the town of Ashley. The centerpiece of the resort was a beautiful lake three to nine feet deep, dug with a team and scraper. A bathhouse was constructed for swimmers, while boaters could rent painted boats. The Burtons brought outside entertainers to the resort including a tightrope walker. With a cable stretched between a tree on one side of the pond and a hay derrick on the other, the artist climbed onto the wire with a ladder and, umbrella in hand, began walking across the cable. About halfway across, the performer suddenly lost his balance and fell into the pond when the mischievious Burton boys lifted the hay derrick with a pole. In winter the pond was popular for ice skating, and N.J. Meagher, who was an accomplished skater, performed on the lake. On weekends and special occasions fireworks were set off over the lake at night. A large dance pavilion and a 1.5-mile racetrack completed the resort's facilities. The twenty-man Adams Band would ride in a specially built



Adams Band Wagon. (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne collection)

bandwagon playing music and leading a procession from town to the celebrations. One of the valley's first rodeos was held at the resort, and visitors were entertained on one Fourth of July by eighty-five black soldiers from Fort Duchesne who, mounted on black horses and carrying shiny swords, put on a sham battle and special maneuvers.

The first building designed especially for social events was the Social Hall, built by a group of investors under the leadership of S.M. Browne. Even though Browne, the first mayor of Vernal, was a saloon proprietor, the events held at the Browne Hall, or Social Hall, were very high class, and he had strict rules of behavior for people attending activities in the hall. The main band for the dances included Peter Hansen, violin; George Adams, cornet; Joel Warner, flute, and Will Hanson on the piano. The Social Hall was sold to the Woodard family for a furniture store in 1910.

Between 1880 and 1882 J.R. "Uncle Jake" Workman built "Jake's Hall" near 235 West Main Street. The hall was a crude log structure lined with unbleached muslin, with drop curtain and wings made of the same material; however, local drama clubs put on many grand performances in the hall. Leo Voight, who painted "Remember the

Maine" on a sheer cliff in Dry Fork Canyon, painted some of the scenery on the drop curtain and wings including a burning ship at sea. Joseph Kirby also painted some scenery for the little hall and in 1893 painted some of the scenery when Workman built the new "Opera House," a large building for dances, socials, dramas, and other events. This building was located on 60 South 500 West. When the Uintah Academy was located on the present tabernacle (temple) grounds, Workman's Opera House was used for athletic and social functions. Traveling groups also performed at the opera house. The building became a cannery in 1919 and burned down in 1936.

Another popular place for dancing, showing motion pictures, and other events was Roberts' Hall in Naples. Ephraim Roberts had built a crockery factory, but it had not been a successful venture and the building was turned into an amusement center. Often playing for dances at Roberts' Hall were George Allred on the violin; his wife on guitar; Bert Allred, cornet; with either Abbie or Rhodie Goodrich at the organ.

In 1911 a corporation was formed to construct the Orpheus Hall for various types of entertainment. Clarence Showalter was president; Andrew King, vice-president; N.J. Meagher, treasurer; with Grant Carpenter and Edward C. Fumner as directors with eight other stockholders. Andrew King was the largest stockholder and Clarence Showalter the manager; cost of the structure was about $20,000. The Orpheus was a brick building located at 100 South Vernal Avenue. It was well known for its springy floor which would move up and down when a crowd danced. Dances and balls of all kinds were held there along with Uintah Academy and Uintah High School dances and proms through 1950. Central School held children's dances in the afternoons in the 1930s and 1940s. Rodeo dances were big events with famous national stars such as Tex Ritter and Jim Reeves occasionally furnishing the music. The first motion pictures were held at the Orpheus as early as 1913 and became a regular feature. School basketball games also were played at the hall since the schools had no gyms. Many theatrical productions were brought in from Salt Lake City. The local newspaper gave rave notices to some and very critical reviews to others. The local Democratic and Republican parties held

many political rallies in the hall. Wrestling and boxing matches were popular events from early years on.[4]

In 1919 the owners traded the Orpheus to Roy and Henry Lee for cattle and a ranch on Bitter Creek. The building was sold the following September to Vogue Theater owners. In 1925 the Vogue corporation sold it to the Uintah Stake of the LDS church. In January 1928 a contest was held to choose a new name; the name chosen was "Imperial Hall," submitted by Jack Gleaton, from over a hundred names entered. The church lowered the ceilings and added an outdoor cement floor where rollerskating became a popular activity. In 1965 the LDS church gave permission to the Vernal Jaycees to raze the building as part of a community beautification campaign.

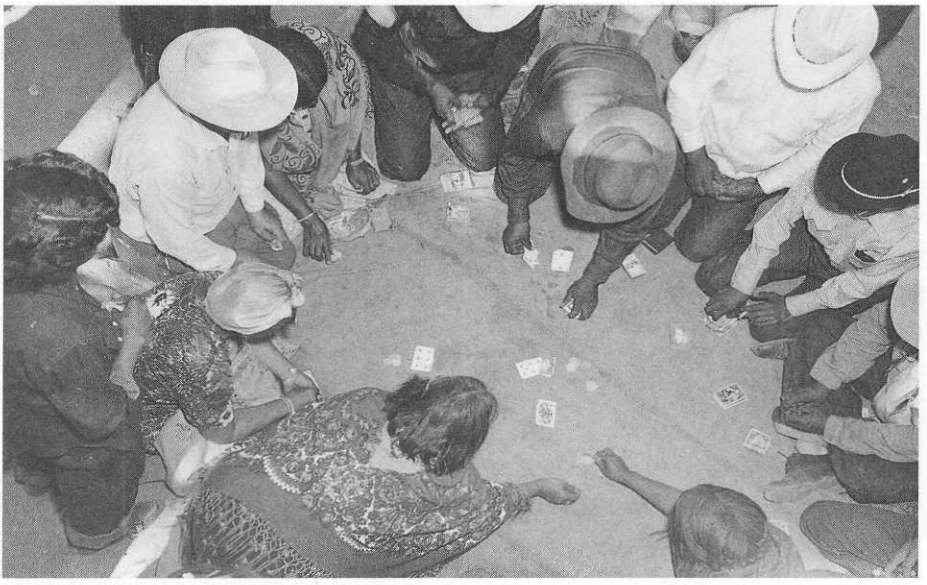
Uintah County provides many recreation opportunities for its residents. The Uinta Basin is renowned for its lakes, streams, and reservoirs, which feature some of the largest and tastiest trout and bass to be found. Fish hatcheries are busy keeping the streams and lakes filled with trout. Catfish can be found in the Green River.

Hunting has been a major recreation for county residents from early times. Deer have always been the most hunted animal; other game animals include elk, moose, and rabbit. An incident related in the 1 January 1898 *Vernal Express* tells of a group of prominent men going rabbit hunting south of the valley in a sleigh and bringing back a "heap of bunnies." The Vernal Gun and Rifle Club, organized in 1902, was the first club of its kind to be organized in the state of Utah. The purpose of the club was to promote the protection of game, to stock the streams with fish, to establish the California quail in this region, and to create a brotherhood of sportsmen. It promoted competitive shooting contests with the soldiers at Fort Duchesne. These "shoots" became so popular that by 1907 the Naples Rifle Club was formed and joined in the competition. Projects the Vernal club worked to achieve included the Whiterocks Fish Hatchery, the Leota and Stewart lakes nesting areas, game preserves, and the reintroduction of beaver in the streams. The name was changed to the Vernal Rod and Gun Club in later years. The club purchased Doc's Beach and moved its facilities to that location, where a shooting range and trap building were constructed. The facility also has been rented for dances and parties.

Doc's Beach was the dream of Dr. Homer Rich, who came to Vernal in 1911. He had a vision of building a resort nestled on the hillside, and in 1931 his dream became a reality. Rich eventually built a few cabins, a snack bar, a small swimming pool, and an outdoor concrete court for dancing and roller skating. The popular resort was located on the Taylor Mountain Road. Huge fireplaces were added to warm the fall and winter visitors. Grassy slopes ran down to the creek, and plenty of trees made this a favorite spot for picnicking, dancing, and other activities. The opening dance featured Winn's Six Ace Orchestra. In 1932 Rich brought in a twelve piece all black orchestra, and from then on he brought in many bands from Salt Lake City. The court was eventually enclosed. Rich sold the property to Frank Carroll, who then sold it to Arthur Toppin. In 1959 Toppin sold the property to the Vernal Rod and Gun Club.

In 1911 the community of Vernal built a combination ball park, rodeo grounds, and racetrack at 100 West 100 North. A grandstand was built and boweries were constructed to provide shade for spectators. Horse races often began at this point and proceeded down 100 North to 500 East. The side streets were closed during the races. When Vernal Avenue was paved with asphalt, the material would be dug out of the First North intersection for the big races and replaced when the event was over. Indians who loved horse racing also participated, gambling in groups on the ground between races.

Horse racing was also held elsewhere around the county, with Glines's Park being one of the popular racetracks. Elza Lay, an outlaw, had a track on the Strip. A very popular track was located on Gene Daniel's property which began at 500 West and 500 North. George Wilson was also involved with this track. Alfalfa was raised in the center of this round race track. Wild horse racing and team pulling competitions were featured. After the Vernal Rodeo Association was formed, rodeos and horse races were held in conjunction until 1948 when the races were discontinued. Horse racing did not start up again until 1954 when the Vernal Racing Association was begun. A Vernal quarter horse named Holey Sox, owned by Woodey B. Searle, became famous. Numerous quarter horse breeders bred their mares to Holey Sox, with some of his colts also winning awards.

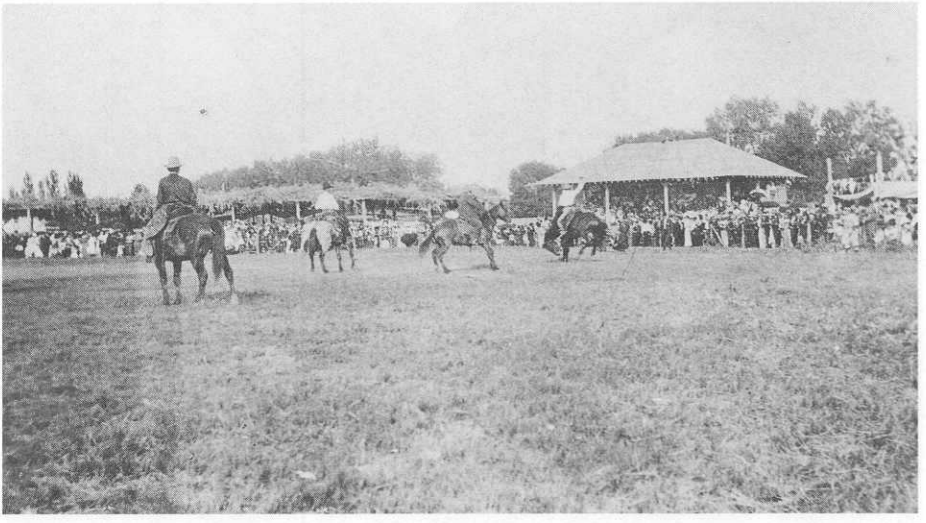


Utes gambling. (UCLRHC collection)

Rodeos, roping competitions, and horse races were usually held at one event. The first organized rodeo—Rough Riders Contest—was held in 1902 at Burton's Resort near the town of Ashley. A rider entered a corral of wild horses, chose the one he wanted to ride, roped it, saddled it, mounted, and then rode the "broncho." The initial part was often more exciting than the ride itself. The first-place prize was a saddle made by Richard Jensen, which was won by Jim McKee. The fifty-dollar first place for steer roping was won by Pardon Dodds. The three-day celebration was climaxed by a "grand ball" at the resort each evening.

In 1914 the Commercial Club sponsored a rodeo which thousands of spectators enjoyed at the fairgrounds. The community celebration became an annual Fourth of July affair, always including a rodeo. The Commercial Club gave a twenty-five dollar prize for the best bucking horse brought to the rodeo, and cowboys either brought in "spoiled" saddlehorses or wild horses caught on the range. Cowboys held wild horse roundups in the hills and brought in horses for the rodeos.

In 1926 the local chamber of commerce initiated the "Golden West Days"—an annual rodeo event. Prizes grew larger each year,



Rodeo at Vernal's first fairgrounds c. 1917. (UCLRHC, C. J. Neal collection)

even including a new car. Guy Rife of Wyoming began providing the horses. Rife's cowboys would drive the herd to Vernal. After the rodeo the horses would be driven to the bench northeast of Vernal and turned loose; the horses returned to Wyoming by themselves. When the Depression hit Vernal, the chamber dispensed with the rodeo; however, in 1930 and 1931 the Blue Mountain cowboys held two rodeos on Blue Mountain—one at the A. H. Cattle Company and one at the Victor Karren meadow. The Blue Mountain rodeo was then moved to the Haslem grove in Jensen on 4 July 1932. The Blue Mountain rodeo committee sponsored a "Wild West Rodeo" in September at the Vernal fairgrounds for a few years. In March 1933 the LDS First Ward chapel in the old fairgrounds area burned down and a rodeo was held to raise funds to rebuild the chapel. Guy Rife furnished the horses; when he received his check, he endorsed it back to the chapel fund.

Funds were obtained through the WPA in 1938 to build a new grandstand at the county fairgrounds. The new grandstand seated 1,400 people, making a total of 3,000 seats including the bleachers. By 1939 the rodeo committee purchased Texas long-horned steers and Brahma bulls and brought in professional clowns, trick riders, and other attractions. Amateur rodeos continued in Vernal and



1919 fair at new fairgrounds southeast of Vernal. The old round exhibit building in the background is no longer standing. (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne collection)

spread to the smaller communities in the county, with Clair Burton of LaPoint providing most of the stock. When Burton retired, Doc Jenkins provided stock for the amateur rodeos. Amateur rodeos and benefit rodeos continue at present.

In the 1950s a local professional rodeo was organized and stock was provided by Swanny Kirby and later other stock contractors. In 1991 a new metal grandstand was installed to seat 7,000 spectators, replacing the wooden structure. The event's name has been changed to Dinosaur Roundup, and Vernal's professional rodeo now draws some of the top cowboys from all over the world. In 1996 it was designated as Utah's official centennial rodeo.

Community leaders tried to establish a fair in Vernal from the early 1890s. It was stated in the *Vernal Express* that an exhibit of fair produce was put together about 1892. In 1901 a major effort was made to organize a fair; the newspaper even stated, "Fair for Sure." A mass meeting was held; however, few showed up. Although big plans were discussed, they were not carried through. In 1909 the LDS primary children sponsored a fair in the stakehouse on Main Street and



In 1910 the first county fair was held at the Vernal Stake House on Main street. (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne collection)

the children brought produce from home. This event was a success and talk began again of a Uintah County Fair. In 1910 the children again sponsored a fair. In 1911 the Commercial Club met with the county commissioners and plans were formulated for a county fair. It was also held in the stakehouse, with small-animal exhibits being outside the building and large-animal exhibits in corrals at the site of the old baseball-fairgrounds where the hospital is now located. This first county fair was a success, and it continued in these two locations until moved to the new fairground provided by the county in 1920. This site now houses the fair, rodeos, livestock shows, and many other activities; it is called Western Park.

Baseball has always been a favorite pastime around the county, with the communities competing with each other. The soldiers at Fort Duchesne also had teams and joined in the competition. The players have often sported uniforms. These teams traditionally were composed of young men or adult men. Today there are also women's teams and the little league organization for children.

Many favorite swimming holes could be found in the county. Old

Bridge Hole, which is now a part of the golf course, was owned by the Kelly brothers, who had built a bridge over Ashley Creek so their sheep could cross. The bridge later went out and a big cottonwood tree fell, making a perfect spot for the kids. Calder's Pond was another popular spot. In Glines, George Perry built a dam to water his oat crops; it was called "Oats Dam" and became a popular swimming hole. Children swam in the canals although it was forbidden because this water was used for drinking, so they took turns watching for the ditch rider. In the early 1900s Maeser children swam in Green's Pond, now known as Christensen's Pond. Later the youngsters swam in the "Kid's Hole" in the canal at about 2500 West and 1500 North. Others swam in Ashley Creek where the bridge crosses the creek at 1100 North Vernal Avenue. Another good hole was located at the point where Ashley Creek crosses the road at 1500 East on 500 North. The pond at Burton's Resort was very popular with young and old alike. Later the kids of Ashley Ward swam in the Preece Pond, built by Conrad Frank, purchased by Nephi Preece, and located along the Manila highway.

In 1942 the Vernal Lions Club sponsored the construction of a swimming pool on Ashley Creek at the Alma Preece farm two miles northwest of town. Thomas Karren was in charge of the pool, which was fifty feet long and five feet deep in the lower end. Eaton Hole, located in the Central Canal in Naples, was also a popular swimming hole.

The first swimming pool to be built for the public was called the Crystal Baths and was a heated, enclosed swimming pool opened in 1927 or 1928. It was located at about 50 West 300 North and was built by George Barker. It included an enclosed pool, deck with diving board, office and storage space, men's and women's dressing rooms with showers, and, later, small living quarters. Tickets were sold and suits rented at the entrance. Barker traded the pool to Edward L. Anderson. Charles and Lillian Henderson leased the pool for two years in 1934–35. Then Sam Roth came down from Dry Fork with his son Boyde and ran the pool, living in the small quarters. The pool closed in 1937 and was sold at a sheriff's sale in 1938.[5]

When a new public pool opened in 1946, residents were pleased to have swimming facilities again. This outdoor pool was located on

the north side of the courthouse grounds and remained in operation until 1970 when the cement cracked and water seepage occurred.

The grand opening of a new Vernal community indoor swimming pool was 2 October 1976. This pool was a joint venture of Vernal City, Uintah County, and the Uintah School District, and it is still in operation at 170 South 600 West.

The Vernal Golf Club was organized in September 1930. The proposed course was to be nine holes. Roosevelt and Duchesne already had nine-hole courses. In May twenty club members laid out the fairways of the course west of Maeser, above the Highline Canal. Greens were laid and the course was ready for use in June. The thirty-foot greens were made of sand from the Green River mixed with residue oil from the Raven Oil and Refining Company at Rangely. Local golfers who had played on a grass course stated that the game was just as fun on a bare-soil course as on some of sod.

In 1937 Green Acres Golf Course was opened on Decoration Day; its owners were J.S. Neitheisel and Thomas R. Johnson. It was built on a forty-acre tract of meadowland 1.5 miles north of Vernal on the Vernal-Manila highway. An open dance floor was also constructed.

During the summer of 1950 the present golf course was envisioned when the Vernal Chamber of Commerce located fifty acres which had a view of Split Mountain, plenty of water available, and featured a series of small, rolling hills. A group of men who owned the Empire Club which was located in the basement of the Hotel Vernal were willing to buy the ground and take on the project. The land was purchased from Warren Richardson and a new nine-hole golf course was built. A couple of years later Dick's Conoco Service Station was slated to be razed, but club members persuaded Conoco officials to donate it to the club. It was moved to the golf course in 1951 or 1952 for a clubhouse.

In 1963 Dinaland Country Club was built in the same location. By 1964 the Empire Club/DBA/Dinaland Golf Course was in financial trouble and Vernal City and Uintah County agreed to participate in the cost of operations. In 1965 a recreation committee was appointed to make a study to see if it would be feasible for the city and county to jointly purchase the golf course. On 26 December 1967

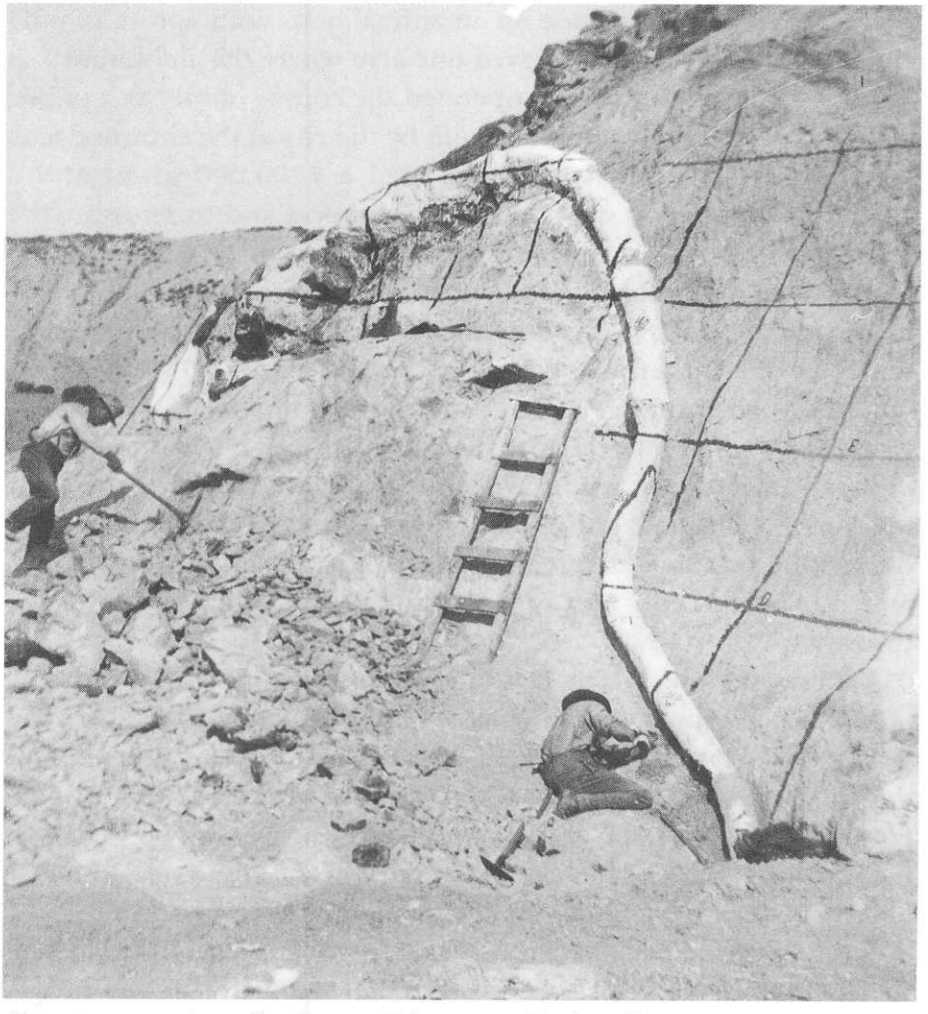
a lease agreement was made on an annual basis with option to purchase. The Empire Club reserved one acre where the clubhouse was located. The city and county operated the course jointly as a public facility, and later a pro shop was built by the city at the entrance gate.

In 1991 Vernal City was awarded a $700,000 grant and a $750,000 loan to add nine holes to the course and to renovate the existing nine holes. The project was completed in 1993. In 1991 the city decided to purchase the existing Dinaland Country Club building and remodel it. Shortly after the remodeled pro shop and restaurant were opened, a fire broke out in the restaurant and the structure burned to the ground. A new structure was completed in 1995. The Dinaland Golf Course is now supported through the new Uintah Parks and Recreation Association and is the location for many amateur and professional golf tournaments. The biggest tournament of the golfing season is the Utah Petroleum Invitational Golf Classic, which is held in July and brings many professional golfers to the county.

Skiing has long been a favorite winter sport of county residents. Claudius Banks put a small rope tow on the back of the hill near 2056 West 2500 North in the 1940s. In 1962 local skiers were enjoying skiing close to home at Grizzly Ridge ski area in the Ashley National Forest. LaRell Anderson and his sons began the project; however, the family could not meet the safety standards of the Forest Service. After much haggling over noncompliance, the permit was cancelled, the building reverted back to the government, and the ski lodge closed. In 1970 cross-county ski runs were created near Grizzly Ridge. Tubing and snowboarding are enjoyed on the old run. Snowmobiling has become popular and a snowmobile club has been organized which works with the Forest Service to improve trails for snowmobiles.

The establishment of Dinosaur National Monument in 1915 was a forerunner of many attractions that would be developed to enhance the area as a tourist attraction. It was estimated that thousands of tourists would visit Vernal during the summer of 1915, so the old Main Street hitching posts were removed and forty street lights installed to improve the appearance of downtown Vernal.

The development of the Dinosaur quarry east of Jensen made it



Crew excavating fossils at Dinosaur National Monument quarry. (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne collection)

possible for visitors to view the actual quarrying of dinosaur bones. In 1940, 10,928 visitors toured this site; in 1994 the number of visitors had grown to 314,117.

The Utah Field House of Natural History on Vernal's Main Street is another popular tourist attraction. It opened in 1947 and houses many natural and human artifacts from the area. In 1962 three life-size "action" groups of dinosaurs were brought to the Field House and an addition was made to provide a spectacular blacklight exhibit

for the fluorescent mineral collection. These projects helped to make the museum one of America's outstanding natural-history attractions. Since then the permanent exhibit has been greatly expanded to include the Dinosaur Gardens, which is a replica of a tropical habitat for dinosaurs. The gardens are inhabited by fourteen life-sized dinosaur models. A steady flow of visitors passes through the gardens all summer, and during the winter holiday season many local and out-of-county visitors come to see the gardens glow with thousands of colored lights.

Hiking, camping, and fishing also are popular recreation activities. One currently booming recreation activity is bike riding. Trails are being built for the convenience and safety of bikers.

River-running is another major sport and tourist attraction for Uintah County. In the 1920s some men began floating the Green River for adventure, and in the early 1930s a number of different men began to take passengers down the river for pay on hunting and fishing trips. In 1931 Bus Hatch, a carpenter, built his first boat in his basement and then found it was too large to move through the exit. He had to use a jackhammer to knock out enough cement to remove the boat.[6] He later built a second boat and with Frank Swain and two other friends took a maiden voyage down the Green River. The men had no life-jackets or waterproof bags, just provisions and bedrolls in a gunnysack tied to the side of the boat. On the first trip one of the boats was capsized and lost in Red Canyon along with all provisions. This did not dampen the men's spirits, and by trial and error the boatmen gradually mastered the Green River. In a couple of years boats were being taken all the way down the Green River to the Colorado River and through the Grand Canyon. During the Depression Hatch could not afford to make as many trips down the river as he would have liked, so he began taking passengers to help pay the expenses. Sometimes he came out ahead, but if he lost equipment he might lose money. By 1936 Hatch and his cousin Frank Swain had established a business floating tourists down the river. This business grew and they became the first commercial outfitters in Vernal; Hatch River Expeditions is still going strong at present.

Other outfitters who took a few passengers on river runs during this time included Norm Nevill and Harry Aleson. After World War II

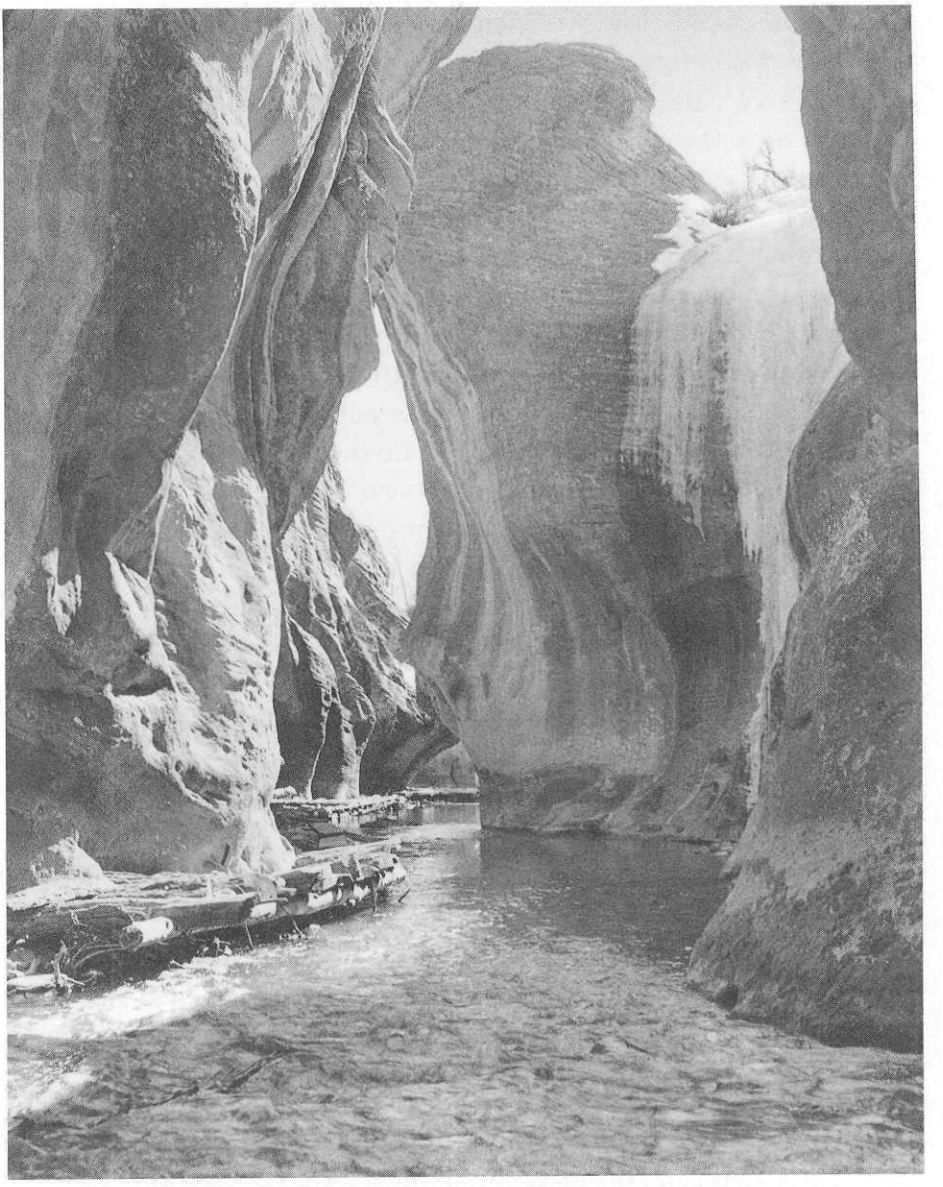
tourism became big business on the Green River and army surplus rubber inflatable rafts were used to carry tourists down the river. By the late 1950s many individuals had purchased rafts and groups of scouts and students also were going down the river. The Public Service Commission of Utah became alarmed at all this unregulated traffic, and in 1959 the Utah Legislature passed the State Boating Act. Less than ten years later, all boaters had to have a license. The number of commercial outfitters began to grow, with Western River Expeditions, Adrift Adventures, Flaming Gorge Lodge, and others providing trips or raft rentals.[7]

In 1965 Senator Robert F. Kennedy, brother of the late president, and his family visited the area and made a river trip down the Green River. A large crowd of Vernal residents greeted the Kennedys at the airport. Kennedy's wife, Ethel, shopped around Vernal, visiting with shopkeepers. Numerous other famous people have traveled to Vernal to take advantage of the exciting adventure opportunities.

Other residents enjoy quieter recreation. Checkers, card games, and chess were all enjoyed in Ashley Valley, with chess matches being made with Wasatch County residents as early as 1897. Poker games were held in back rooms of saloons and pool halls.

After the first courthouse was built in 1900, the surrounding city block was turned into a park which later included a gazebo, or bandstand, a rose garden, and numerous trees. All local parades ended at the park, with speakers and bands playing in the gazebo. As county buildings have been built and expanded, the park has diminished in size.

Humphrey's Park was a large meadow at the mouth of Brush Creek Gorge. Brush Creek ran through high cliffs in the gorge with no banks near the canyon mouth and was inaccessible until Wallace Calder built a wooden boardwalk around the cliff above the water. He and others put cedar trees in the gorge which were wrapped in combination wire, anchoring them with bolts cemented into the ledge with melted sulphur. Cables were attached from the bolts down to the baskets of cedars. Two cottonwood trees were attached to the top, and slats were nailed to them, making a boardwalk hanging on the side of the ledge above the water. The first high water filled the wire baskets full of silt and rocks, making the structure more solid.



Boardwalk built in Brush Creek at Humphrey's Park. (L. C. Thorne)

Up along the boardwalk on the canyon wall were what Calder called "Flowers in the crannied wall." Little flowers surrounded by moss grew out of a huge protruding rock on the side of the ledge like a table-sized flower basket with a spring inside which trickled down

into a large pool below. A bench was placed near this pool with the above quotation from Tennyson written under glass. This walk led to an open area where picnic tables were located. Several tables were lowered over the cliff with ropes and another was floated on the water up the stream by Calder and his wife, May. He built an arched lattice bridge across the stream at this site and also placed steel ladders on the canyon wall, making it possible to climb down from the top onto the boardwalk. Calder, who was local LDS stake president, and many church members spent years working on the area. This secluded picnic area was enjoyed mostly by fishermen and families and for large church outings and scout activities. Humphrey's Park was named for Col. A.E. Humphrey, who owned the phosphate operations and gave Calder a ninety-nine-year lease.[8]

In 1941 the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), including sixty young men with their foreman, built a fence enclosing the Big Spring Camp at Humphrey's Park so that the boy scouts and other organizations that used this camp on their overnight hikes would be assured of pure water from the spring, which was then approved by the state board of health. On occasion the scouts hiked from this point almost a mile through the gorge to the "V Cave" to spend the night. This huge V-shaped cave featured a sand floor and a huge overhang which provided sleeping room for several troops of scouts, who enjoyed the trips in both summer and winter. The many little springs which trickled through the crevices made beautiful giant icicles in the winter. One spring was fitted with a pipe for a drinking fountain which was also approved by the board of health. Early Indians had also used the gorge, as was evident from hand- and toe-holds that had been chipped down the cliff at one place. With all of the rock art in the area one might expect to find them on the canyon wall ledges, but none have been found. Most of this area has now been destroyed or made inaccessible by the expanding phosphate operations.

In 1943 a lease was drawn up with George D. Merkley leasing his pasture in Dry Fork to the county as a recreational park. The lease required the county to pay yearly rent of twenty-five dollars to cover taxes on the six-acre park and gave the county a ninety-nine-year lease on the property, which was first called Canyon Park. In 1943 the Lions Club undertook the maintenance of this park. Members set

several hundred cedar posts around the park, fencing it in for protection. It was planned to build a rustic lodge with restrooms, and the Lions Club and Junior Chamber of Commerce members went to Taylor Mountain and cut timber, running it through Allen Sawmill. Restrooms were built, but the lodge never transpired. A rock fireplace later was built along with other improvements. Through the 1940s and 1950s scout jamborees, school outings, family reunions, church activities, and picnics were held there. The large hill with cliffs on the west end of the park was an ideal hiking and climbing location. A flagpole was placed on the highest peak; unfortunately, one high school student plunged to her death from the top of the ledge. When the county gave up the lease on Merkley's Park, the Lions Club built "Remember the Maine" Park in the mouth of Dry Fork Canyon. With two pavilions and several tables in the trees around Ashley Creek, it is still a popular place for school reunions and picnickers.

Ground was obtained in 1957 for a combined city-county park on the Maeser highway at about 700 West and 500 North. The beautiful park now has playground equipment and volleyball nets, with little league baseball diamonds located to the south. The Jaycees had purchased a piece of ground which is now part of the ballfield west of the Middle School and started little league baseball teams in 1954–55. In the 1960s that field was traded for one south of the present city-county park on the Maeser highway where diamonds were constructed. The league began with three teams and a goal to give every boy in the area a chance to play, and that goal has been fulfilled. The ground was turned over to the city by the Jaycees.

In 1976 a $42,000 Bureau of Outdoor Recreation grant to Vernal City made possible further development of the city park. A pavilion was constructed on the city-county park complex with funds of $15,000 from the national bicentennial celebration going into the pavilion project. Another pavilion was constructed on the west end of the park by Woodey B. Searle in memory of his grandson. A pavilion, park, and baseball diamonds also were constructed in Naples City when that city was formed.

In 1992 a new recreation district was formed with funding coming from the recreation budgets of the four entities in the district—Vernal City, Naples City, Uintah County, and the Uintah School

District. Also in 1992 Uintah County and Vernal City were granted $50,000 from the Utah Division of Parks and Recreation for construction of the Kid's Canal Parkway.

In 1966 the Ute Indian Tribe applied for a grant to build a $1.2 million tourist-recreation complex on Highway 40 near Fort Duchesne. Groundbreaking for the Bottle Hollow Resort took place in 1968 and work began on the complex. The resort was built on the north end of 420-acre Bottle Hollow Reservoir and offers a swimming pool, cultural exhibits, convention facilities, and a dinner theater. In April 1976 Lester Chapoose, Ute tribal chairman, snipped the ribbon marking the opening of the $2.2-million convention center at Fort Duchesne owned by the Bottle Hollow Resort. A lake for fishing and boating was built on Indian land and became a popular place for inside and outside recreation, with dances and dinner shows being held at the resort. In later years the facility was used solely for Indian functions.

The Western Park Complex opened in 1991 and houses a museum along with the Outlaw Trail productions each July as well as other activities, including rodeos, livestock shows, horse shows, and county fairs. The facility is also used for many social events and meetings.

Many tourists take time to visit the Daughters of Utah Pioneers Museum, which was established in the old rock tithing house on North Vernal Avenue in 1951. In 1958 the building was moved to 200 South and 500 West, where an addition was built to house an enlarged museum. Also the Regional History Center at the county library with its collection of newspaper microfilm, local history items, and individual life histories attracts many tourists searching for traces of ancestors or just looking to find more information about the area. The Outlaw Trail History Center is also located there and attracts enthusiasts from all over the world.

Vernal's chamber of commerce greatly enhanced the beauty of Vernal by placing and helping to maintain numerous flower pots along Main Street. Locust trees also were planted. During the summer the abundant colorful growth entices tourists to prolong their visit.

Entertainment and Cultural Events

After the Mormons arrived, many cultural events developed out of church activities, including choir groups performing concerts, cantatas, and operettas. Early musical groups included the Vernal Concert Club, the Vernal Quartette Club, and the D.Q. (double quartette) Club, which later changed it name to the O.F.F. Club. Swain Brothers' Mandolin Club furnished music for many dances in the towns of Ashley and Vernal at the turn of the century. Several families with musical abilities and instruments organized family bands; notable among them was the Olsen Family Orchestra. The first attempt to form a brass band was made by E.J. Starkie about 1877. He had been a member of a band in England and gathered about twelve men together to form a band to perform on special occasions.

In 1890 George E. Adams, a graduate of the Boston Conservatory of Music, arrived in Vernal and organized a group of interested men. The band practiced every night and by the Fourth of July its members could play four numbers including "The Star Spangled Banner." Adam's Cornet Band led the parade through Vernal on a bandwagon made from a large wagon with a hay rack. It had a raised seat in front for the drivers and a raised seat at the rear for the drummers, and it was decorated with national colors and drawn by four big gray horses. Lon McCarrel, the driver, was dressed as Uncle Sam. The July 24th celebration that year was cancelled because of a diphtheria epidemic, but the band traveled around the valley serenading the folks.

Another noteworthy band which played at the Golden Age Center weekly dances for years was the Harmony Four, which included Newel Behunin, Marie Paulson Hatch, Vena Wardell, and Elma Smith. The three ladies were sisters from the Rasmussen family, and all played by ear, seldom using music. Tom Karren's orchestra was popular at the Orpheus dances. Tom played the saxophone; Ray Stringham, drums; Wiley Stewart, banjo; Marie Singleton, piano; and Mervin Thomas was vocal soloist.

Some of the most popular cultural events were productions put on by dramatic groups including the Home Dramatic Club, Vernal Dramatic Club, Uintah Dramatic Club, Occidental Dramatic Club, New Dramatic Company, and Aleazar Dramatic Company. Later out-

lying LDS wards began dramatic clubs as did some of the smaller communities such as Hayden. These productions featured many of the prominent people of the valley and were greatly looked forward to by most. All kinds of farm produce was accepted as payment for tickets to the home talent dramas. After the Opera House was built and the roads to the valley were improved, stock theater companies from Salt Lake City and other outside points also came to Vernal.

A chautauqua, which was an educational and recreational assembly with a program of lectures and concerts, was presented in November 1911 by the Uintah Academy, the Vernal public schools, and the LDS Uintah Stake. It featured local talent, and different programs were put on weekly for twenty-six weeks. In 1920 Orpheus Hall management brought in a chautauqua festival which lasted five days, including instructive lectures and fine music and other entertainment from the chautauqua summer circuit, which included performers from as far away as New York.

Professor William Hanson, a marvelous musician who taught music at Uintah High School, and Gertrude Bonnin, a Sioux Indian who was a graduate of the New England Conservatory of Music, wrote an opera in the early 1900s. It was presented at the Orpheus (Imperial) Hall in 1913 and concerned tribal dances of the Indians of the Uinta Basin. The production was also presented at the Utah State Fair. In 1938 Hanson took the "Sun Dance Opera" to New York City to be performed.

A corporation was formed on 29 December 1916 to build and operate the lavish Vogue Theater. The theater could seat 425 patrons and the balcony and the loges at the back of the theater featured upholstered seats. The theater's first manager was Lawrence Allen, followed by Richard Gilbert, and finally Edith Lawrence Cooper. The first movie shown was a silent picture, *Poor Little Peppina*, starring Mary Pickford. The theater contained a "Wurlitzer PianOrchestra," which was a combination of seventeen instruments in one that was operated by one musician to provide music for the silent pictures. In 1929 Edith Cooper introduced talking pictures at the Vogue. In 1935, 300 upholstered seats were placed in the theater. When the new Main Theater was built across the street in 1939, the Vogue Theater building was remodeled, 200 new seats were added, and a neon marquee

was installed. The Main Theater was built by Thomas Karren and Francis Feltch at a cost of $30,000. The modern building featured the best movie equipment and latest screen. It was located at 70 East Main.

In 1946 a movie theater was constructed by Duward and Alson Shiner a few doors up the street from the Main Theater. It was called the Vernal Theater and featured a refreshment center and ushers along with plush seats and a big screen. This theater is still in existence and is one of the longest continuous businesses in Vernal.

Shiner Brothers built a drive-in theater in 1950 on west U.S. Highway 40 at 1700 West 1000 South. Movie lovers could sit in their cars with a little speaker attached to the window and enjoy movies in comfort. This theater also still operates during the summer.

In 1976 the Twin Cinema was built by Warren Mott and sons at 1400 West U.S. Highway 40. The complex initially featured two movie theaters and a reception center. This business was sold in 1982 to Kent Limb, who closed the reception center and turned it into a third theater. The business was then called the Tri Cinema. Limb later sold the business to Brent Shiner, who now runs it along with the Vernal and drive-in theaters.

Early in the settlement of the valley, being too far from the large cities to travel to cultural events and societies, people began to organize their own debating and literary societies such as the Vernal Literary and Debating Society in 1896, the Polaris Club in 1898, the Shakespeare Club in 1908, the Gleaners Literary Club also in 1908, and the Maeser Art Club in 1914. In February 1964 the Little Gallery of Arts was organized with art shows and receptions held at 192 South 300 West, at the Knitters Boutique, and later at the Uintah County Library. The Potter's Guild was organized with fifteen charter members in April 1970 in the Maeser shopping center but has since been discontinued.

The Uintah Arts Council was organized and received its charter on 27 February 1978 and has brought many cultural events to Vernal including the Utah Symphony Orchestra and Ballet West. Art shows have been a monthly event at the Western Park Museum since it opened in 1991. The Uintah Poetry Society was organized on 26

March 1972. Members have won prizes at Utah state poetry gatherings and the organization has published several poetry books.

Clubs, Organizations, and Associations

Various women's clubs have been organized throughout the years. In 1898 the Thursday Afternoon Club was organized with many of Vernal's most prominent women as charter members. In 1899 this club became affiliated with the Federation Clubs of America and in 1900 the club name was changed to the Thalia Club. The Current Topics Club was organized on 20 October 1904; its object was to keep in touch with world issues. This club was a federated club, and under it the Junior Current Topics Club was formed. These clubs also sponsored other federated clubs in the valley. By 1941 five federated women's clubs existed in the Uinta Basin and a district was organized known as the Uintah Basin District Federation of Women's Clubs. Women's clubs continue to support worthwhile projects in the county, although most no longer belong to the federation.

A popular ladies club in 1918 was the Women's 20th Century Club comprised principally of wives of professionals and businessmen of Vernal. It is no longer in existence; but in 1996 the Vernal Business and Professional Women's Club, which was organized in 1925 with prominent lawyers and other professional women, is active.

Many social clubs also were organized by county women. One of the most prominent was the Beaux Arts Club, organized in 1927, which is still one of the leading women's clubs. Card-game clubs have always been popular. Four of the most prominent bridge clubs were the Vernal Tennis Bridge Club, organized in 1914; the O.T. Club, organized in 1934, which continued for fifty years; the Bridge'ette Club, founded in 1935; and the Ace High Club. A duplicate bridge group is active in 1995. Other social clubs included the Merry Widow Club, begun in 1909; the Bachelor Girls Club, founded in 1921; and the Maids O' Maeser, formed in the early 1900s. Later Maids O' Naples was formed. Three sororities of Beta Sigma Phi currently are located in Vernal, including Gamma Beta, Xi Alpha Xi and Perceptor Pi.

Some social clubs such as the Sego Lilly Club, organized in 1901, and the Lone Tree Betterment Society, organized in Jensen in 1915, included both men and women. The Owl Club was organized in Fort Duchesne during the 1890s for the white population, excluding the black soldiers. The Aviation Club, organized during World War II, was popular with both men and women. The Knife and Fork Club was an elite dinner club in the 1940s, and many other dinner clubs were formed for short periods in later years. Men had a social club in 1908 called the Prowlers Club. A young mens' dancing club was active in 1896 and the Mill Ward Boys' Social Club met in 1899.

Many homemaker groups and nature clubs were organized in the early years. On 10 March 1987 the Uinta chapter of the Utah Archaeology Society was organized. The group has helped with many archaeology digs and was active in helping the Ashley National Forest Service mark the old Carter Military Road. Members have been instrumental in locating many petroglyph sites.

In 1894 the Women's Suffrage Association was formed with Carrie Stringham as president; Sarah Colton, vice-president; Tilly Young, second vice-president; Rose Reynolds, secretary; and Addie Burton Longhurst, treasurer.[9] The women met at the Vernal Stakehouse and an executive committee was formed including Sadie Holdaway, Agnes Bennion, Nancy Colton, Julia Dillman, and Vilate Bennion. The women were active but not given much recognition until January 1896 when Utah became a state. At that time Mary Orser was appointed a member of the county board of examiners. The *Vernal Express* stated, "This is the first recognition of woman's suffrage in Uintah County and possibly in the State."[10]

In 1918 a program was begun by a Utah State Agricultural College professor to work with young people. By 1920 local banks began helping the youngsters receive loans to buy lambs, and the group became the forerunner of the 4-H clubs of the valley.

Numerous men's civic clubs have been organized in the area and have been instrumental in promoting and serving Uintah County. The Elks Club, for example, was first organized in 1899 and later reorganized in 1967. It is not only a social club but a service club to the community, supporting numerous projects such as scholarships, hospital improvement, the convalescent home, the Golden Age

Center, aid to needy families, Christmas baskets, Fourth of July fireworks, and many sports activities for young people.

The local chamber of commerce was first organized in Vernal in 1899 by businessmen hoping to secure a railroad for Vernal. The group has since been dismantled and reorganized several times. At one time the chamber worked in conjunction with the Commercial Club to promote the area. The Commercial Club reorganized in 1910 and incorporated. In 1923 the chamber's board of directors deemed it unwise to continue mixing a recreational club in chamber-of-commerce work and the chamber moved to a new building. The present chamber of commerce was organized in 1949 with sixteen standing committees. One of the first projects backed by chamber members was the Echo Park Dam. Although this particular project was defeated, it helped lay the foundation for the Flaming Gorge Dam. Chamber members also supported the Central Utah Project, which resulted in the construction of Steinaker and Red Fleet dams.

The Junior Chamber of Commerce (Jaycees) was organized in the spring of 1936 with Don Barr as president. The membership consisted of men between the ages of twenty-one and thirty-five, and the organization undertook civic improvements. A big project each year was decorating and lighting the streets of the Vernal business section at Christmastime; cleanup campaigns were also held. The little league baseball program was initiated, and ball diamonds and tennis courts were built along with many other services to the community. The Junior Chamber was not affiliated with the Vernal Chamber of Commerce and is not active at the present time.

The Lions Club was originally the Uintah Club. William B. Wallis later introduced the Lions Club idea to the Uintah Club, and the group of men decided to become affiliated with the national organization of Lions clubs. On 26 August 1927 a local Lions Club was organized. A charter was received and the club became associated with the International Association of Lions Clubs on 30 September 1927. The Lions maintain many standing committees which provide for a broad range of community activities. In the early years much of the club's time was devoted to improving U.S. Highway 40 and the Vernal-Manila road north across the Uinta Mountains from Vernal to U.S. Highway 30. A special committee was appointed to promote

the Dinosaur quarry at Jensen, and the Lions were influential in getting the area recognized nationally.

Lions Club members formed a band called the Kidoodlers which was popular not only in Vernal but across the state of Utah in 1944. The band always dressed in western attire and was accompanied by four burros. The Kidoodlers included J.C. Anderson, I. Ray Stringham, C.P. Lewis, Henry Schaefermeyer, Earl Chivers, S. Don Hacking, Ernest Caldwell, Earl Calder, George Roth, Rulon Hacking, A.A. Call, Reese Timothy, Ken Stringham, Merle Campbell, Hap Wise, Chellus Caldwell, J. Ferron Hacking, and O.M. Thurman.

Lady Lions were organized on 15 January 1938 to aid the Lions and as a social club for the wives of the Lions. The club disbanded in May 1991. In 1987 the International Lions Club had voted to allow women into the organization, and on 23 October 1991 eight Vernal women were inducted into the Lions Clubs International and became members of the Vernal Lions Club. Sunrise Lions Club was organized in 1981 for members who preferred to meet in the early morning. In December 1990 it was combined back with the night group. Leos Club is another spur of the Lions Club and began in 1993. It is made up of young people from fourteen to twenty-six years of age and has about twenty-five members at present.

The local Rotary Club was founded in Vernal in 1958 with Bud Parkinson as the first president. Doctor T.R. Seager was one of the first board members and still serves on the present board. Thirty-nine members belong to this service club at present.

An attempt was made to form a Kiwanis Club in 1924 when a representative from Oregon spent several days in Vernal for this purpose; however, the minimum number of thirty members could not be found. The Vernal Kiwanis Club was later organized in January 1947 with thirty members.

The Vernal Independent Order of Odd Fellows (I.O.O.F.) was organized in March 1896 and was known as Odd Fellows Lodge 24. Meetings were held above the Vernal Drug Store at 14 West Main. Later the Odd Fellows held meetings upstairs in a large building at 78 South Vernal Avenue called the Odd Fellows Hall. The lodge was discontinued when a Masonic lodge was organized in 1947. Wives of the Odd Fellows formed Rebekah Unity Lodge 3 in 1906; it func-

tioned until about 1989 when the charter was turned back to the state.

A group of men first formed the Masonic Lodge 20 in Myton, and in 1938 an installation meeting was held in Vernal. In January 1947 Ashley Lodge 28 of the Free and Accepted Order of Masons was instituted at installation ceremonies at the local I.O.O.F. hall.[11] The Masons now own a brick building at 166 South 100 West. The Order of the Eastern Star, based upon an affiliation with the Masons, was formed in Myton in 1922 and was called the Duveromy Lodge of Eastern Star. The name Duveromy was composed with the first two letters of Duchesne, Vernal, Roosevelt, and Myton.

The Uintah Basin Industrial Convention (UBIC) was organized in 1923 at Fort Duchesne. About 3,500 people attended the first convention. It was organized as a non-political, non-sectarian group that knew no geographical boundaries. Conventions were educational and social events, so those who attended might return home refreshed and broadened in mind and outlook toward life. In 1923 many homesteaders were depressed, and many were leaving the valley. Water to irrigate crops was scarce; for several years people had planted crops only to see them start from the ground and later burn for lack of moisture. Also, transportation facilities were limited and there was no ready market for crops which did survive. Attending the UBIC brought these people in contact with others in the same predicament. Educational opportunities were presented in farming and other aspects of life.

The UBIC was later combined with the local Indian fair to make a more colorful convention, and it continued to be a place for the discussion and solving of Uinta Basin problems. By 1938 it was estimated that 15,000 to 20,000 people attended the fair.[12] This event was looked forward to by people from all over the region. Campgrounds were located on the parade grounds area at Fort Duchesne. The participants pitched tents, picnicked, visited, and took in exhibits, programs, and pageants. In 1939 or the early 1940s the Fort Duchesne UBIC was discontinued. Some say this was due to the Depression; others claim that the availability of automobiles took away the need to camp. In the early 1950s the Roosevelt UBIC began. It is well attended to this day, but old-timers say the romance of the old Fort

Duchesne convention is missing. Like many things today, it is more commercial. Indian participation in the fair also has faded somewhat, but the UBIC carries on with something for everyone.

Daughters of Utah Pioneers (DUP) organized in Vernal on 24 August 1928; its first camp was called Camp Vernal. That camp was divided in 1930; its new division was called Camp East, which was later changed to Camp Tokowana. Between 1930 and 1932 other camps were organized, including Camp Thornburgh at Maeser, Camp Sacajawea at Glines, and Camp Escalante at Jensen. By 1948 ten camps existed in the county. There are nine camps at present. A DUP relic hall was formally opened in the Uintah County Courthouse in August 1931. Displays were later moved into the library when it was at 81 West Main. When the library moved to Central School, the DUP was given a room at that location until it was needed by the school in 1947. The LDS church then allowed the group to move into the old rock tithing building at 49 North Vernal Avenue, where the museum remained until 1960 when the church gave them deed to the building and it was moved to 190 South 500 West. Members completed a large museum in 1962 behind the rock building.[13]

Many associations have been formed to provide help to local servicemen. One was the Marine Mothers of Uintah County, formed in 1944. Under the leadership of Jennie Weeks, monthly letters, Christmas cards, pastries, and other goodies were sent to Marines overseas. During the Korean War, the Uintah Service Association was organized by a group of patriotic citizens under the name of the "Americanism Committee," headed by Marguerite Colton. On 20 February 1951 the association began a project of sending newsletters to all the men and women in the service. This project was continued until April 1958.

The American Legion began in Paris, France, immediately following the World War I armistice of 11 November 1918. In Uintah County the Witbeck Post 11 was organized on 4 July 1919 and named for two brothers killed in the war. The American Legion later encompassed veterans of all wars and was an active advocate for the rights of veterans. In addition to assisting veterans, this organization has provided programs that benefit America's youth, such as American

Legion boy's and girl's state, legion baseball, high school oratorical contests, scouting, and boy's clubs. In April 1951 a group of veterans met to organize a Jensen American Legion post—Leland Vaughn Gardner Post 124. Seven posts now exist in Uintah Basin District 9.

A unit of the Women's Auxiliary of the American Legion was set up in Vernal in 1921. (In 1952 local resident Eva Ashton was named national president of the American Legion Auxiliary.) In 1924 the women's auxiliary of Witbeck Post began looking for a project they could undertake in memory of the World War I soldiers. It was decided to erect a large statue of a soldier—the "Doughboy" statue. Mrs. Homer E. Rich was appointed chairman of the project. Local schoolchildren joined in the drive, bringing any amount they could afford. A list of names of all those donating was to be put in a capsule in the base of the statue.

The statue was placed on a pedestal on which were five plates with the names of the 300 soldiers who had served in the war and thirteen who were killed in action. The cost of the statue was $1,250 and Vernal City bore the cost of the erection of the pedestal. The statue was placed in the main intersection of Vernal on the Victory Highway, which had already been dedicated to the soldiers of the war. Everyone driving through Vernal on the Victory Highway would recognize the high honor and respect Uintah County held for its soldiers. The statue was unveiled on Veterans Day, 1924 . Civil War veterans unveiling the statue included 100-year-old Dr. Harvey Coe Hullinger, the oldest Civil War veteran in Utah, and eighty-five year-old Rev. D.N. Minick.

Less than six weeks after the statue was placed in the center of the highway, a young man came speeding down Main Street, forgetting about the statue, and hit the base, wrecking his car. Several other drivers also hit the statue, and in 1934 the state road commission decided it had to be moved. The state moved the statue to the courthouse grounds and placed it in front of the old courthouse, where it remained until 1958 when the courthouse was torn down. It was then moved northeast of the courthouse to the rose garden park. In 1975 the Vernal Business and Professional Women's Club purchased a metal plaque honoring all members of the armed forces from Uintah County. This was placed on the second level of the base when the

statue was moved and rededicated as part of the national bicentennial in 1976. In May of that year the statue was moved to the front of the courthouse grounds on the southeast corner.

In 1992, after Post 5560 of the Veterans of Foreign Wars was reorganized in Vernal under the leadership of Commander Duane Hall, a project of moving the Doughboy monument to "its final resting place" in front of the courthouse was initiated, creating at the same time five monuments as a memorial to soldiers serving in all U.S. wars. To raise funds for this project bricks used as the base were sold at three dollars each.

Several forerunners of the Uintah Wool Growers Association were organized in early years, and the Wool Growers Association was organized by 1894.[14] In 1906 wool growers of Uintah County met at the Bank of Vernal and started an organization for the advancement of the industry. Any person who was an owner of one hundred or more head of sheep was eligible for membership in the Uintah County Wool Growers Association. The local newspaper index shows the organization being in operation through 1911. In 1923 a group was referred to as the Uintah Sheep Growers Association.

On 27 February 1926 a group of sheepmen gathered to form an association for the purpose of promoting and fostering the sheep and wool industry in the Uinta Basin. Another purpose for joining forces was to fight predators which were killing the sheep. The group decided on the name Uintah Sheep Grazers Association. In order to comply with the rules and regulations of the forest service, the organization was reincorporated in 1934 and the name was changed to the Uintah County Wool Growers Association, and later to Ashley Wool Growers. It became affiliated with state and national wool growers associations. A banquet and dance were held once a year. The organization disbanded in the 1970s when the sheep industry began to decline in the county.

A ladies auxiliary of the Ashley Wool Growers Association was organized in 1930 with Mrs. B. H. Stringham as the first president. The value of lamb as food was promoted and the organization is best remembered for its "Make It With Wool Contest" for young ladies.

The Uintah Cattle and Horse Growers Association began in 1912 with Willis L. Johnson as president. Rewards for information leading

to the arrest of horse and cattle thieves were given. By 1921 the association was being called the Cattle Growers Association, and its objectives were to promote beef and stop cattle thievery. The name was later changed to the Uintah Cattlemens' Association, and it is still operating at the present time. Each year the organization holds an annual cattlemen's dinner and dance.

The Uintah Cowbells, an auxiliary of the Uintah Cattle and Horse Growers Association, was organized on 1 December 1952. Its first president was Marie Dodds; the vice-president was Julia Hill, and the secretary, Mildred Finicum. Twelve charter members joined at the first meeting and three more women enrolled at the second meeting. The purpose of the group was to assist the Cattlemen's Association in its efforts to promote the livestock industry.

The Ladies Petroleum Club began when the oil industry expanded and women followed their husbands to Vernal. It was comprised of wives of oilmen or women working in an oil-related field. The club has provided many services to the community as well as promoting comradery among the women.

The Faculty Women's League was organized in 1930. The purpose of the club was to support any worthwhile high school project and also to further social contacts among members. Those eligible for membership include all women faculty members and the wives of male faculty members of Uintah High School. One of the club projects is an annual tea for all high school girls.

Many church organizations promote education and progress in the community. They include the P.E.O. Sisterhood, which was organized in Vernal in 1920; the Ladies' Aid Society of the Kingsbury Congregational Community church, which was organized in 1903; and the Guild, a group of women interested in helping with the activities of the Kingsbury Congregational Church, organized in 1938. The LDS Relief Society provides an organization in which all Mormon women can be affiliated. The Catholic church has a group called the Saint James Ladies Club, which was organized in 1922. The women have socials and do service and spiritual work.

Vernal has always supported social, cultural, and recreational development. Recreational facilities, especially for the youth, are con-

tinually expanding, and locals continue to join together in clubs and associations for personal enjoyment and service to the community.

ENDNOTES

1. Joe Haslem, interview with author in June 1986 talking about early fiddlers including Willis L. Johnson; tape recording in possession of author.

2. Daughters of Utah Pioneers of Uintah County, comp., *Builders of Uintah* (Springville, UT: Art City Publishing Company, 1947), 244. The article "Early Valley Amusements" tells this story with the name of Alma Hatch instead of Alva. It is assumed that this must be a typographic error.

3. Ibid.

4. See, for example, *Vernal Express*, 12 July 1912.

5. Doris Burton, "Crystal Baths swimming pool, first public pool," *Vernal Express*, 27 April 1983.

6. This story was told to Troy Burton by Brig Swain. The story was verified by Duff Swain to the author on 21 November 1994.

7. Roy Webb, *If We Had a Boat* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1986), 143–55.

8. Earl and May Calder, telephone conversation with author, 27 November 1995.

9. *Vernal Express*, 27 September 1894.

10. Ibid., 27 September 1894 and 9 January 1896.

11. Ibid., 9 January 1947.

12. See *U.B.I.C.—Indian Fair, Scenic Edition* (Vernal and Roosevelt, UT: Vernal Express and Roosevelt Standard, 1938).

13. "DUP Ends Many 'Homeless' Years," *Vernal Express*, 21 December 1961.

14. *Vernal Express*, 2 December 1897.

13

Silver Stars and Jailhouse Bars

LAW AND ORDER

When settlement began in Ashley Valley in 1873, Utah was governed by territorial law. Ashley Valley, located in Wasatch County, was far removed from other settlements, and, until the establishment of Uintah County in 1880, all legal matters, criminal cases, probate, and civil court cases were handled in Heber City, the county seat. Many disputes were settled with fists or the end of a six-shooter. Minor infractions by LDS church members were usually handled ecclesiastically by local Mormon church officials.

Isolated geographically from the county seat, residents of Ashley Valley petitioned the territorial legislature in 1880 for their own county. On 18 February 1880 the territorial legislature created Uintah County, which included all of northeastern Utah from the Utah-Colorado line west to the 110 meridian, south to the Green River and the Emery County line, and east to the Utah-Colorado line. The town of Ashley was made the county seat.

The legislature appointed Jeremiah Hatch as probate judge and Pardon Dodds, Thomas Bingham, Sr., and Isaac Burton, Sr., as selectmen.[1] When the first elections were held in August 1880, Isaac

Burton, Soloman Roof, and S. Campbell were elected as selectmen. The following year Roof's post was declared vacant and N. C. Davis was appointed as selectman. In August 1880 the legislature selected Thomas Bingham as the county probate judge.[2] Bingham was one of the early settlers in the county and a local leader of the Mormon church. The judge presided over the selectmen (changed to county commissioners in 1896) in meetings where county decisions were made. In addition to deciding wills and probates, administering the estates of deceased persons, serving as guardians of minors and others incapable of caring for themselves, and granting petitions for United States citizenship, county probate judges presided over all civil and criminal cases in the county, thus making the probate judge a very powerful official. The territorial legislature continued to select county probate judges until the passage of the Edmunds-Tucker Act in 1887 when Congress gave that power of selection to the president of the United States.

Isaac Burton, a non-Mormon, was appointed acting probate judge in 1882 to fill the remaining term of Thomas Bingham, who was in hiding from federal marshals who were hunting polygamists in the territory. Bingham was eventually arrested, tried, and sentenced to three months in the territorial prison at Sugar House, near Salt Lake City. James H. Glines was chosen probate judge and remained in office until 1889 when Burton was appointed by President Grover Cleveland. Burton remained judge through May 1894, when E.J. DeFriez was appointed. DeFriez officiated until 1896, at which time Utah became a state and probate judges were eliminated from county government.

The first meetings of the probate judge and county selectmen were held in the cabin William Gibson had moved into the town of Ashley during the Meeker Massacre scare. Uintah County purchased Gibson's cabin to serve as the courthouse. After the county seat was moved to Vernal in 1893, the county moved the "Gibson Courthouse" to 92 North Vernal Avenue where it was used as the courthouse until 1899 when the residents of the county approved a building bond of $16,000 to build a new courthouse. Construction on the new building began in 1900.

Passage of the Poland Act by Congress in 1874 removed all civil

and criminal authority from the county probate judges. Federal district courts in the territory were given jurisdiction over all civil and criminal cases, and Uintah County was placed in the district court located in Provo.

When Utah gained statehood in 1896, the state constitution created six district courts, with Uintah County assigned to the Fourth District Court headquartered in Provo. In 1978 a circuit-court system was established in addition to the district courts. Kenneth G. Anderton became the first circuit-court judge, and he was succeeded by Whitney Hammond in 1980. After Hammond retired in 1984, A. Lynn Payne served until 1993. In 1982 Uintah County had become part of the Seventh District Court, and Richard Davidson of Vernal and Boyd Bunnell of Price were appointed as judges. In 1986 Dennis L. Draney became district court judge. In 1989 Uintah County was placed in the Eighth District Court, which serves Uintah, Daggett, and Duchesne counties with two judges, currently John R. Anderson and A. Lynn Payne

The first prosecuting, or county, attorney was William Ashton, who was appointed by the probate judge, probably in 1881. His remuneration was set at 25 percent of all fines collected in cases prosecuted by him. In 1895 the Constitution of the State of Utah provided that the county attorney should be elected for a two-year term.

William Gibson was appointed the first county constable in May 1880. In August, after deliberation by the county selectmen, a second constabular position to serve the Brown's Park precinct was placed on the ballot. This constable was also the poundkeeper and had authority to administer the law, but he was subordinate to the elected sheriff. In their isolation, the first lawmen often had to be prosecutor, judge, and jury. A great deal of outlaw activity occurred in the area, especially in remote sections like Brown's Park.

The chief law-enforcement officer for Uintah County is the sheriff. The county sheriff was elected for two-year terms of office. The first elected sheriff for Uintah County was Lycurgus Johnson. He and those who succeeded him were responsible for keeping the peace in an isolated county where cattle theft and general lawlessness were common. Trespassing offenses on the Indian reservation were fre-

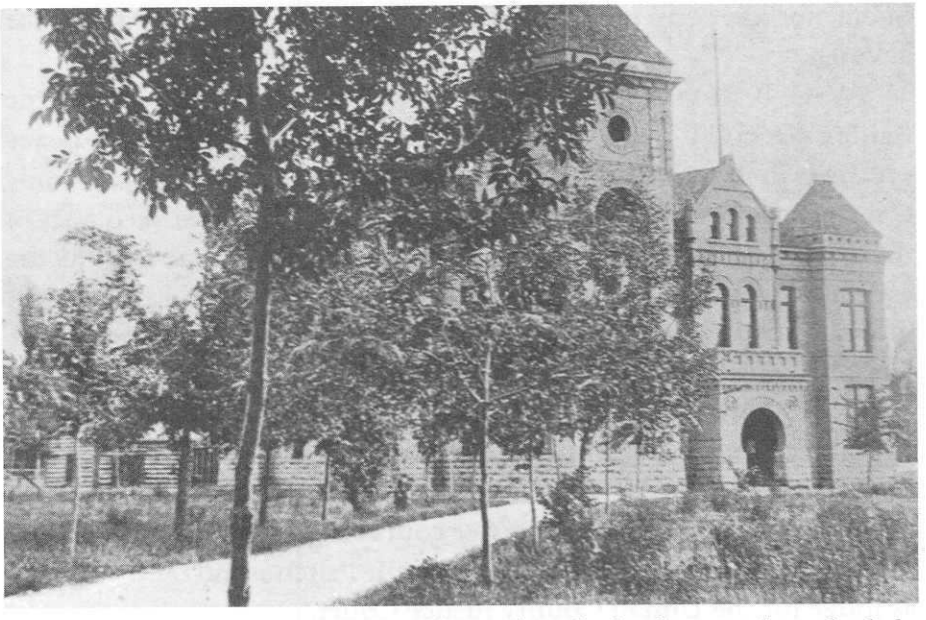
quent, and the Strip presented a major law-enforcement problem for lawmen.

W. C. Britt was appointed the first justice of the peace for the Ashley Precinct in May 1880. The number of justice-of-peace precincts in the county fluctuated through the years, but by 1940 only three precincts were operating—one assigned to the eastern part of the county, one to the western section, and one at Vernal. In 1989 the legislature changed the name of justice of the peace to justice court judge. In 1991 the districts in the county were consolidated to one Uintah County justice court with one judge.

When Naples City came into existence, Rolene Smith Allen was appointed Naples City Justice Court judge. In July 1994 changes were made again when Vernal City began its own justice court and appointed Pat McRae as city justice court judge. This made three justice courts functioning in the area. Brent Feltch is currently serving as judge for the Uintah County Justice Court.

Uintah County Jails

Jail facilities were inadequate before the turn of the century. After Uintah County was formed in 1880, local prisoners were often boarded in the sheriff's or constable's homes. If the prisoner was considered dangerous, he was handcuffed and the officer sat up at night and guarded him. When Sheriff Sterling Colton had to leave home, he left a handcuffed prisoner in a bed for his wife to watch.[3] The first county jail was built in 1883; it was twelve by fourteen feet, with stone walls two feet thick and nine feet high, covered with square timbers six inches thick, and featuring a durable door with substantial locks and hinges. The door was lined with sheet iron and there was one window with bars. The roof was covered with dirt. This jail soon was destroyed by fire, and in September 1884 plans for a much larger jail, twenty by thirty feet, were let out for bids. The bids for the new jail were evidently too high—county officials authorized Sheriff Johnson to fix up the cellar back of his store to serve as the jail. In 1885 Johnson built a rock jail and rented it to the county for two years. This jail did not prove satisfactory, however, and in 1887 two "iron cages" were ordered, and a jail of logs and rocks was built around the cages, or cells as they are now

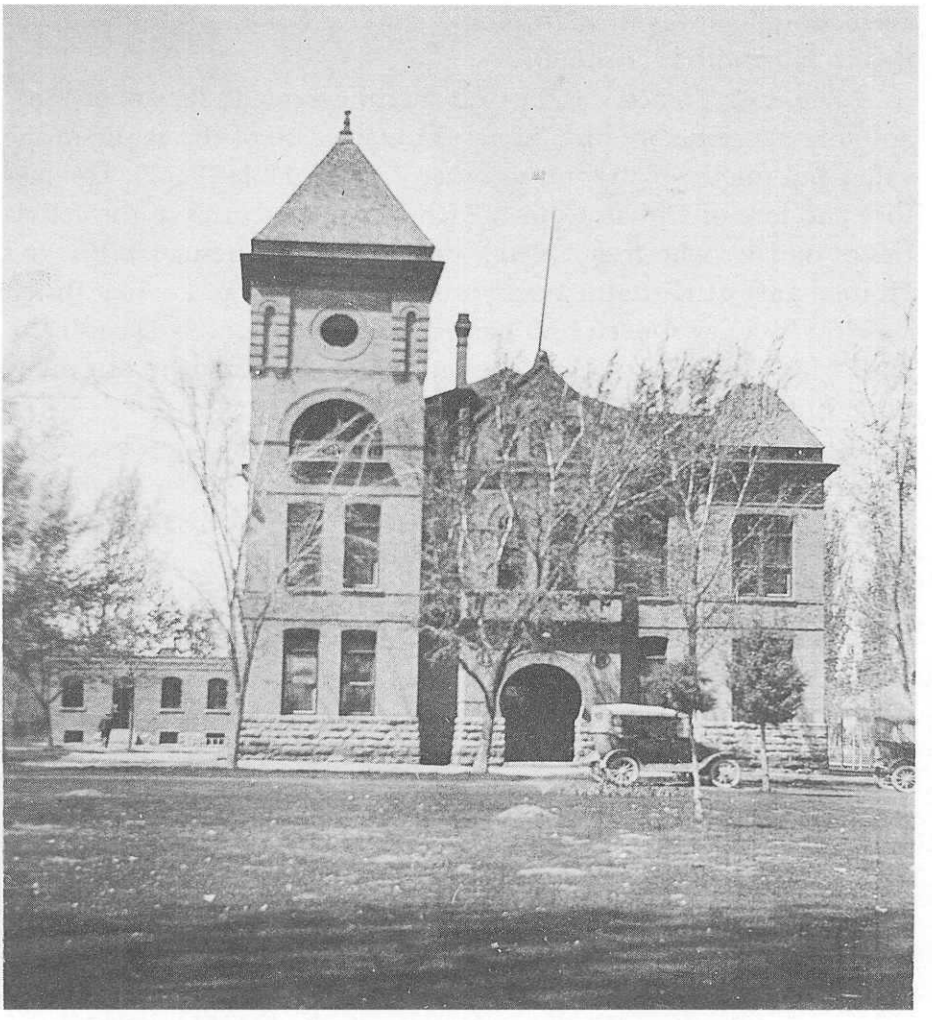


Uintah County Courthouse with log jail in the background on the left. (UCLRHC collection)

called.[4] An inspection of the jail found it to be in good condition except for the fact that weapons could be slipped through the window or through an opening dug between the logs, so the sheriff was compelled to keep guard day and night when he had a prisoner. After the county seat was moved to Vernal, the jail was taken apart and moved to the present courthouse grounds, where it was used until 1910 when it was replaced by a new brick building.[5] When the second courthouse was built in 1959, it included a jail in the basement. In 1985, after the third courthouse was built, a brick jail was built to the east of the courthouse. This jail can house 110 prisoners.

Sheriffs and Outlaws

William Gibson acted as sheriff until the first county election was held in 1880. In 1881 he was defeated by Lycurgus Johnson in the election. Sheriff Sterling Driggs Colton became the next elected sheriff in the fall of 1883 and he, like his predecessors, had to enforce the law during a period of peak outlaw activity in the region.[6] Once Colton made a long hard horseback trip to



Uintah County Courthouse with the new brick jail on the left of the courthouse. (UCLRHC collection)

Greystone, Colorado, to bring back a prisoner. He placed the prisoner in jail and went home for some badly needed rest. The next morning he was informed that the prisoner had escaped and was in a local saloon bragging how the sheriff could not capture him again. The sheriff stepped into the dimly lit saloon and saw a man move away from the bar, then saw a flash, and a bullet went through his hat. Colton drew his gun and in seconds the man lay dead on the saloon floor. Colton felt remorseful about shooting the man

even though it was in self-defense, and he was thankful he never had to kill another criminal.[7]

William E. French was the next sheriff, elected in the fall of 1887, and, like those before him, he tried to take care of the crime in the valley but made no attempt to cover Brown's Hole (Park). The history and lore of Uintah County includes many stories of the activities of outlaws who frequented Vernal and sought refuge in Brown's Hole, a part of Uintah County until 1917. Characters like Butch Cassidy, Elza Lay, Queen Ann Bassett, Gunplay Maxwell, David Lant, and "Mad Dog" Harry Tracy are among the best known; but many other outlaws also left their mark on the county.

Brown's Hole, located in the corners of three states, became a favored location for men on the run from the law. The Utah portion of the area was in Uintah County. Butch Cassidy and his Wild Bunch headquartered in the Hole. His lieutenant, Elza Lay, married an Ashley Valley girl, Maude Davis, as did outlaws Cleophas Dowd, who married Ella Colton, niece of Sheriff Sterling Colton, and Gunplay Maxwell, who married Ada Slaugh from the Davis Ward area. Ashley Valley boys who took up with outlaws included David, John, and Alma Rasmussen, James McKee, and Robert and Charles Atwood.[8] The outlaws spent a lot of time in Ashley and Vernal saloons. Charlie Crouse of Brown's Hole, who was perhaps the worst outlaw of them all, purchased a saloon in Vernal and kept beds upstairs for outlaws.

Butch Cassidy purchased a .45-caliber Colt six-shot revolver in 1895 from the Ashley Valley Co-op in Vernal;[9] but Cassidy and his gang maintained good terms with the people of Ashley and Vernal, doing their skullduggery elsewhere. Robberies, hold-ups of travelers, and murders kept Uintah County law officers busy.

A favorite story is told of a robbery at the old Ashley Valley Co-op in 1888. Clerk Enos Bennion had just locked up for the night when George Bartlett, Charley Weist, and George Freestone wanted to come in so Weist could buy a hat. Bennion let them in and climbed upon a ladder, as the hats were on the top shelf. The door had been left open and two outlaws entered the store shouting, "Hands up!" Charley responded, "What the hell for?"

One of the two men shot a revolver in the air, and Bennion came

down the ladder fast. He was ordered to unlock the safe, which held two drawers of money—gold, silver, and paper. The men each took a drawer and ran out of the store. Mounting their horses, they rode straight south out of town. Reaching Fifth South, in front of the Bartlett home, they hurriedly emptied the money into a sack and threw the drawers down. The next morning one of the Bartlett boys found sixteen dollars in change lying at the side of the road. The robbers also missed a bag in the safe containing fifty dollars in gold pieces. After the holdup, an examination of the hat Bennion had been wearing revealed the bullet had passed within an eighth of an inch of his head. His hat hung on a wall in the office for many years as a memento of his close brush with death.[10]

When John T. Pope was elected in 1890, he became the first sheriff to venture into Brown's Hole and even had a ranch on Red Creek north of the Jarvie ferry. It was said that Butch Cassidy and Elza Lay often spent time at Pope's ranch. Ann Bassett (called queen of the outlaws) lived in Brown's Hole and wrote in her diary that Pope was friendly with the outlaws, who were often at his place.[11]

After one of their bank robberies, Pope received a warrant for the arrest of Butch Cassidy and Elza Lay. Even though Pope had never had any trouble with them, the sheriff formed a posse. It was rumored Cassidy and Lay were staying at the Allan Davis ranch north of Vernal; Davis was Lay's father-in-law. The outlaws were tipped off and, evading the posse, rode into town to the Overholt Saloon. When the posse arrived back in town, young Albert Davis warned the outlaws, who escaped out the back door and left town. Three weeks later Pope received a postcard mailed from a town in Arizona. It read, "Pope, gawd damn you, lay off me. I don't want to kill you!" It was signed "Butch." Ann Bassett wrote in her diary that she thought Pope turned his head and let Butch step out the back door of the Vernal saloon and escape.[12]

Pope did bring many other outlaws from Brown's Hole to justice. One malefactor, nicknamed Buckskin Ed, went to the Hole after causing trouble in Vernal; Pope went after him. After arresting the man, Pope attempted to bring him across the Green River in a boat. He turned his back for a moment and the outlaw slipped out a concealed knife and stuck it in Pope's throat. Pope whipped out his

revolver and fired, dropping the outlaw into the river. The sheriff tied a kerchief around his neck and made it home. When asked what had become of Buckskin Ed the sheriff replied, "The last time I saw him he was on his way to Arizona."[13] Pope was sheriff during the worst outlaw times and had to kill many men to enforce the law and protect himself. Cattle rustlers contributed greatly to the problems of the sheriff.

Sheriff Pope had trouble with local outlaws as well. The McKee brothers from Diamond Mountain were in constant trouble. On the Fourth of July 1891, Jim McKee came into town and stood on a street corner making remarks about the law which he punctuated occasionally with a shot from his gun. Pope walked up and told McKee he was under arrest. McKee went for his gun, but Richard Pope, John's brother and later sheriff himself, came up behind McKee and hit him over the head with his gun butt, knocking him out. Another time Pope was shot at while walking down a dark street in Vernal. He believed the shooter was McKee; however, he could not prove it, and could do nothing but be glad the bullet had missed him.

The sheriff's reputation grew, and it was said that outlaw gangs offered a reward on his life, ranging up to $4,000. The sheriff was ambushed several times but his good fortune and alertness kept him alive. Stories of Sheriff Pope's adventures are numerous.[14]

In 1898 Sheriff William Preece took a posse into Brown's Hole after one of the most hardened outlaws, Harry Tracy, an escapee from the Salt Lake City jail along with David Lant, a young man who had previously worked for the McCoy Sheep Company and spent a lot of time in Vernal. A story appeared in the 25 November 1897, *Vernal Express* stating Sheriff Preece had been looking for Lant and Tracy, who had been hiding in the valley. The outlaws had stolen several horses from ranchers living in Merrill Ward (Naples) and were traced to the Uintah Reservation where some of the horses were recovered. The escapees hid out in the outlying Naples area with some of Lant's old friends, Will Bascom and Charlie and Nephi Atwood—young Mormon boys gone astray. Tracy and Lant rode with the Atwood boys, Jacob Kay, and Will Bascom to Waldemar Lybbert's place in Naples. Four horsemen came in view riding fast toward them. Tracy had a spy glass; he looked in it and said, "It's the

law, give me my rifle, I'll stop 'em!" Bascom looked through the glass and exclaimed, "Hold your fire, that's my brother Jack!" So the outlaws jumped on their horses and escaped. Jack Bascom, David Manwaring, Waldemar Lybbert, and Sheriff Preece made up the posse. Lybbert had worked with the sheriff of Lavern, Utah, before coming to Vernal, where he had been deputized to keep law and order in Naples.[15]

Lant and Tracy hid out around Vernal until it was no longer safe and then went on to Brown's Hole. The two hunted men joined with another badman, Patrick Louis Johnson, who ended up killing Willie Strang. The outlaws fled to the hills and a posse was formed to go after them. This venture ended with the capture of the outlaws by the Vernal and Craig, Colorado, lawmen and posses. One man, John Bennett, who had tried to help the outlaws was hung from the Bassett gate by vigilantes.[16]

Several young men of the Vernal area who took up with the outlaws, including Charles and Robert Atwood and James McKee, ended up in prison. Before Sheriff Preece and other lawmen left for Salt Lake City with the young Vernal outlaws, the jail was guarded for several hours in order to avoid interference from their friends.[17] Henry Lee operated a roadhouse at Halfway Hollow near the notorious Strip west of Vernal and became friendly with outlaws. He joined in at least one robbery that can be documented and served five years and six months of an eight-year sentence in the Wyoming Territorial Penitentiary.[18]

Elza Lay and other outlaws ran a saloon on the Strip where silver dollars and currency were counterfeited. Pope was assigned to close the saloon, to take inventory, and sell the building and stock. He found about two thousand dollars in counterfeit currency which he turned over to the Northwestern Detective Agency at Denver, Colorado.[19] Lay also had a racetrack on the Strip where horseraces were held with the Indians and gambling was common. As long as outlaws stayed in the Strip area, they were fairly safe from the law, as only a federal marshal could enforce the law and even then only for violations of federal statutes. This strip of land had been removed from the Ute Indian Reservation for mining purposes; but, since it still remained within the boundaries of the reservation, it was diffi-

cult to enforce the law there. This left it wide open for saloons, gambling, and brothels, resulting in an outlaw paradise. Uintah County records indicate that at least sixteen men were killed in gunfights on the Strip from 1888 to 1906. These were only the deaths that were officially investigated; recollections by early settlers account for many more.[20]

Between 1911 and 1933 major crimes facing the sheriffs had changed from outlaws riding horses to bootleggers in cars during Prohibition. In 1909 Utah's governor refused to sign legislation creating a local option to prohibit alcohol. In the Vernal City election of 5 November 1909 the choice of Vernal remaining "wet" or going "dry" was placed on the ballot. The citizens chose to remain wet, not because "Vernal was a town of drunkards" but because "they knew that liquor would be sold and drank in the town, and they preferred to have it done openly, under strict and proper regulation, than in the hidden caverns of perjured protection." It was also felt that since the legislature had decided it too risky an experiment for the state, it was certainly too much of an experiment for the little town of Vernal.[21] A move was made, however, by the anti-saloon people to ban sales of liquor; yet Republicans held dances and rallies to keep the town wet and won big. However, the movement to ban consumption became too strong to ignore, and in 1911 the governor signed an option bill. As a result of the legislature's action nearly every community in Utah, including Vernal, went dry. A local anti-saloon league was organized in 1913 by twenty-two prominent LDS church leaders. Its purpose was to prevent the reinstatement of saloons in Vernal.[22] The local saloons changed to pool halls which sold only beer; however, gambling became a big problem and bootlegging escalated.

Seven years later, in 1918, Utah banned all alcohol sales and consumption. The U.S. government did the same after passage of the Eighteenth Amendment to the Constitution two years later. Even then many people refused to give up liquor consumption, and numerous stills were set up in Uintah County from Tridell to Randlett, Deep Creek to Jensen. Stills were found in cellars, a restaurant, under a truck garden, and in a honey house; even a janitor had a little bootlegging business going under the Uintah State Bank.[23]

Josie Bassett Morris ran a still on Cub Creek, bringing her moonshine to town in false-bottomed milk cans; another bootlegger floated his product in fish nets in the Green River. Sheriff Lafe Richardson, who began his duties in 1918, confiscated thousands of gallons of liquor, arrested many bootleggers, and destroyed many stills during this period. One humorous incident occurred when the sheriff arrested some Kemmerer, Wyoming, men bootlegging in Vernal. The Kemmerer whiskey had a reputation of being the best around, and it sold well in Vernal. The sheriff confiscated the whiskey and stored it in a cell in the jail. Two young men had been arrested and placed in the next cell. When a friend, Harold Workman, came to visit, he suggested the men snare a few bottles of whiskey out of the next cell for him. The whiskey could not be reached from the prisoners' cell, so Harold went home and made a hook. This worked so well that the men went into business and bootlegged whiskey out the jailhouse window. The whiskey was nearly gone when the sheriff caught on to what was happening.[24]

In 1933 the majority in the state voted to repeal Prohibition, although the majority in Uintah County voted to remain dry. At that time a liquor store was opened in Vernal and was located in the Uintah Rexall Drug Store, with proprietor T.T. Johnston appointed as Utah liquor agent for Uintah County.

During Herb Snyder's seventeen-year tenure as sheriff—1939–45 and 1947–58—two savage murders of women occurred, in 1943 and 1956. Sheriff Snyder and his deputies solved both crimes, bringing the perpetrators to justice. His successor, Norman Fletcher, was sheriff from 1959 to 1970—and endeavored to keep rebellious youths in line as drug use became more common. Sheriff Arden Stewart took over from Fletcher in 1971 and served until 1986. Stewart had to contend with witchcraft cults and claimed UFO sightings, for which cattle mutilations in the area were occasionally blamed.

The current sheriff, Rick Hawkins, like the lawmen of old, has to handle gangs, and the modern gangs with cars and motorcycles are proving perhaps more troublesome than the old ones who rode horses. Hawkins also faces the growing problem of narcotic rings in addition to the increase in gang activity and violence.

City Marshals and Police

On 5 December 1893 W.C. Britt presented a petition with fifty-one signatures to the county court requesting a town charter for Vernal. Incorporation followed and elections were held in November 1894. John W. Galloway was elected to serve as the first Vernal town marshal. Galloway served one year and did not file to run in the following November election, nor did anyone else. County Sheriff John T. Pope agreed to be the combined city marshal and sheriff and served in this capacity until 1899. Elections were held every two years on the even-numbered year. As Vernal had been incorporated as a third-class city in 1897, the job was now called *city* marshal.

In 1899 J.M. Tolliver became the city marshal.[25] During his second term, however, he was arrested by the sheriff for "retaking" trespassing animals. He also was in constant trouble with the sheriff for being drunk and disorderly. In October 1901 he submitted his resignation to the city council at their request.

Fred Wood was elected as the next city marshal and held the position twelve years, longer than any other marshal, although the years were not in succession. Two other long-time marshals were Lafayette (Lafe) Richardson, serving ten years, and Herman Miller, also serving ten years. The early city marshals were often busy keeping peace in the area saloons. In 1907 Marshal Richardson had to arrest saloon owner Jim MacKnight (Josie Bassett Morris's first husband) for keeping a disorderly house. Marshals also found themselves settling disputes over water, animals, or women.

Some amusing incidents occurred. Marshal Richardson once arrested men for speeding on Vernal Avenue with a sleigh and team, and the judge gave them a steep fine. In 1908 city marshal Hyrum Meeks, who was nicknamed, "Little Detective," was taking some prisoners out for exercise and forgot something; as he stepped back inside to get the item, a prisoner slammed the door and locked him in. The prisoner, a local man serving time for a minor charge, did this as a joke, but by the time the door was shut he found himself looking down the barrel of a gun and found that the joke was on him. Tragedy was also part of the job; Meeks was once called to a site

where the dirt roof of a cabin had caved in, killing two boys and injuring their mother.

By 1906 Vernal also had a night watchman who patrolled the city streets at night. Henry Foster was city marshal in 1912 and Andrew King was the night marshal. Vernal had voted to outlaw liquor in 1911 and city officials believed the state liquor law gave them power to pass a search-and-seizure ordinance when they had reason to believe liquor for sale was being kept on saloon premises. King and Foster raided Henry J. Erekson's saloon and confiscated over $1,000 worth of liquor. Erekson brought suit against the two officers and city justice B.D. Nebeker to recover the value of the liquor. The district court ruled against the city and the officers after a long court fight. Another saloon owner, Bert Singleton, also brought a suit against the two officers. The pressure proved too much for these two lawmen, and they resigned in December of the first year of their term.[26]

Marshal Byron Eaton was instructed in 1920 to arrest people exceeding the 8-mile-per-hour speed limit. Night marshal Adam Erickson served for about twelve years under many of the city marshals. Several of the marshals also were elected as sheriff, either before or after serving their terms as city marshal; but only John T. Pope served in both capacities at the same time.

In 1949 Arthur P. Corless's name began appearing in the local newspaper as chief of police. In January 1950 the city reappointed Corless as chief of police, which is the first record this writer found officially designating a Vernal chief of police.[27]

In October 1952 the city council reorganized the police force and introduced new regulations. All police officers were given equal rank, with City Manager LeRoy Taylor given chief-of-police authority—the office of chief of police being considered unnecessary by the council. At this time the officers who had been called marshals were designated policemen and their badges were changed to read "Vernal City Police." (The badges were updated in 1993 to read "Vernal Police Department.") The officers were also required to wear police uniforms. Officers at that time were Art Corless, Carl Staley, Hugo Hullinger, Jack Boren, and Boyd Boren.

In March 1954 it was decided that a police chief was needed, and Jack Boren was appointed. Earl Labrum was hired to replace him on

the force. Boren ran for sheriff in the primary election and lost just before he resigned at the end of September. Officer Carl Staley was appointed to temporarily fill his position. By November it was decided not to refill the position, and city manager LeRoy Taylor was placed over the police force again; but he soon resigned due to health problems.

Morris Caldwell was appointed chief of police in April 1955. Harold Alexander was appointed as policeman in his place. Caldwell resigned, and Claudius Banks was appointed chief of police on 31 May 1956, serving for eighteen years before retiring in 1974. The largest police force under Banks was seven officers.

The police force was reorganized in November 1972, at which time Banks was put in charge of special investigations. Captain Richard Horton was appointed head of the Vernal Police Department and was in charge of the criminal-investigation division. Lieutenant Milburn Hatch assumed the duties of traffic division officer. Other officers were Lowell Gray, Tom Campbell, and Darrell Lance. In 1974 Jock Jones was appointed chief of police; there were ten men on the force. During his six-year period in office, a few major crimes occurred and he spent much of his time modernizing the department. Officers Mike Hamner and Robert Downard began computerization of the department under Chief Jones.

Robert Downard became chief of police in 1980. The force rose to thirteen officers as the oil-shale boom was in full swing and transient workers camped along the Green River. This "shadow population" created many problems for the officers, and the police force grew to twenty-three men by 1983. Downard was then faced with handling the bust period when oil-shale activity decreased dramatically. The force dropped from twenty-three to thirteen officers. Drug problems had become common and Vernal's police started focusing on the situation as a crime problem. Downard established the "Uinta Basin Narcotics Strike Force." An extensive surveillance of possible drug rings in the county and drug traffic in schools was the result. Also under Downard, the "Child Abuse Task Force" was set up in 1988. This was one of the first such units in the nation and has been used as a training model for others desirous of establishing a similar task force.

Following Downard's resignation in 1990, Mike Hamner was appointed chief of police. Thirteen men remained on the force along with one animal control officer. The economy was healthier during Hamner's first years, with a steady increase in local population. In 1992, after nearly a year of investigation, law-enforcement officers arrested seventy-two Uinta Basin residents for narcotics and firearms violations. Gang activity became a problem in the 1990s, with several known gangs established in Vernal by 1994. The department is currently working hard to rid Vernal of this bad element.

Chief Hamner has continued to modernize the department. He has consolidated dispatch and made emergency 911 service available through grant funds. In March 1995 fourteen police officers and one animal control officer were on the city police force.

The Naples City police force was organized a year after that city was formed in 1982. The first year service was contracted from the county. John Ledkins was the first chief of police, followed by Everett Johnson, Reed Merrell, and Steve Guibord. In 1994 a chief with a sergeant and one other officer were on the force. The city of ten square miles has over 450 homes and 110 businesses. In 1992 the Naples police handled a total of 2,381 cases called into central dispatch plus other cases which did not go through central dispatch.

Juvenile Crime

The juvenile population is committing a larger portion of area crimes each year. The figures have more than doubled in the past decade. In 1984 there were 840 referrals; in 1995 there were 1,800. In 1991 there were 116 felonies; this increased to 152 in 1992, 163 in 1993, 190 in 1994, and 204 in 1995. Misdemeanors dropped from 634 in 1991 to 576 in 1992; but from that point they increased to 771 in 1993, 905 in 1994, and 1,056 in 1995.[28] Most of these crimes are theft and burglaries; some are drug related.

Prior to the mid-1950s a juvenile court judge periodically came from Provo to handle cases of minors—those under eighteen years of age. About 1953 attorney Ray Nash was appointed deputy judge in charge of juvenile offenses and served until about 1957. Several others persons then served in this position through 1964. At that time Tom Freestone was appointed director of juvenile court service for

five eastern Utah counties. He acted as court referee and as the judge pro tem in the absence of the district judge assigned to juvenile court. First District judge Paul Keller periodically came from Price. The district was then redivided and district judge Merrill Hermansen served from Provo.

Juvenile court was held in the old county courthouse in the 1950s. The next decade it was moved to the second Uintah County courthouse. In the 1970s money was obtained from a community impact grant and the current building was constructed at 780 West Main; a juvenile detention center was built at 980 West Market Drive.

Federal Bureau of Investigation

A Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) office officially opened in Uintah County on 5 August 1991. Agent Michael McPheters had begun operations in Vernal prior to this in February and special agent Manuel J. Johnson joined him later. Johnson was one of fifty Native American FBI agents in the country. The Vernal office serves six counties: Uintah, Daggett, Duchesne, Carbon, Summit, and Wasatch. The office is involved in interstate investigations and cases of felonies on the Uintah-Ouray Indian Reservation. At present (1995) McPheters is the only agent in the Vernal office.

Indian Justice

Native American people from the American Revolution to the passage of the Dawes Act in 1887 have been treated as wards of the federal government. The government has generally worked from the assumption that white norms are best. This attitude has been identified as "paternalism" by some and has often clashed with the Indian cultures and values. The passage of the Dawes Act, shortly after the creation of Uintah County in 1880, set in motion a move towards the dissolution of Indian tribes and the distribution of Indian reservation lands to individual Indians and families. Indians were promised, at a future date, American citizenship with all its rights, responsibilities, and privileges, including being subject to national laws. Within the realm of law and order, Congress in March 1885 extended federal criminal law over Indians for major crimes including murder, manslaughter, arson, burglary, and larceny. Lesser crimes committed



Ute Indian Police. Sitting on the left is Charlie Mack and Panuch Jack on the right. Standing left to right: John Duncan, Bill Chapoose, Tully Jack, and Scott Jack. (UCLRHC collection)

on the Uintah and other reservations were the responsibility of the Indian police.

For the Uncompahgre Indian people, the dissolution of their social order and the distribution of their reservation lands occurred in 1898. For the Uintah and White River Ute people, this occurred in 1905 when their reservation was thrown open to white settlement. With the opening of the Uintah Indian Reservation, those Indians living in Uintah County who received citizenship through the acceptance of individual land allotments were subject to the laws of the county and state. In 1906, however, Congress passed the Burke Act, postponing for twenty-five years citizenship for all Indians who received individual land allotments. With the Burke Act, the enforcement of the law on the former Ute reservation land became mixed. Depending upon the crime, where the misdeed occurred, and who was involved, the Uintah County sheriff, federal law-enforcement officials, or local Indian police have been involved. Court cases also have followed a mixed jurisdiction and responsibility.[29] In more recent years there has been an improvement of cooperation among county, state, Indian, and federal law-enforce-

ment officials as well as improved judicial cooperation among the various courts.

A major problem historically in the county has been sales of liquor to the Ute people. The federal government in the 1820s took steps to prohibit the sale of liquor to all Indians. Prohibition of the sale of alcohol to the Indians was strengthened further in 1862. The setting apart of the Strip for the mining of Gilsonite compounded the problem of prohibition of the sale of alcohol to the Utes. Saloons were quickly established and located on the front doorstep of the Uintah and Ouray Reservation. Illegal sales of whiskey continued to be a serious problem in the county.

The opening of the Uintah Indian Reservation in 1905 solved for a time the liquor question while at the same time created increased jurisdictional problems for Indian and white law-enforcement officials and the courts. State law prohibited the sale of liquor to any Indian regardless of the circumstances. Uintah County commissioners order a vigorous enforcement of prohibition of liquor sales to the Utes. In 1920, with the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment, Prohibition was implemented nationwide.

Violent crimes were committed on the reservation prior to its opening; from 1882 to 1904 at least eight Indians were murdered—five by whites, three by other Indians.[30] After 1905 such crimes continued to be committed. It appears that federal officials cooperated with local officials in apprehending perpetrators and then often turned them over to local officials for arraignment and incarceration. Court dockets reveal two cases—one of assault with the intent to kill and another of rape, in which the perpetrators were Indians and the victims white—were tried in state courts. The first case involved an Indian who was arrested by the Indian police and then turned over to local authorities for prosecution.[31]

In the 1920s a reform movement nationwide developed out of a concern over the loss of Indian allotment lands to whites. Later, under President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, Congress, embracing many of the Indian reformers' concerns, passed the Indian Reorganization Act. With this change of law and direction, Indian tribes once again established their own tribal governments and tribal judicial system under federal supervision. This change of policy was

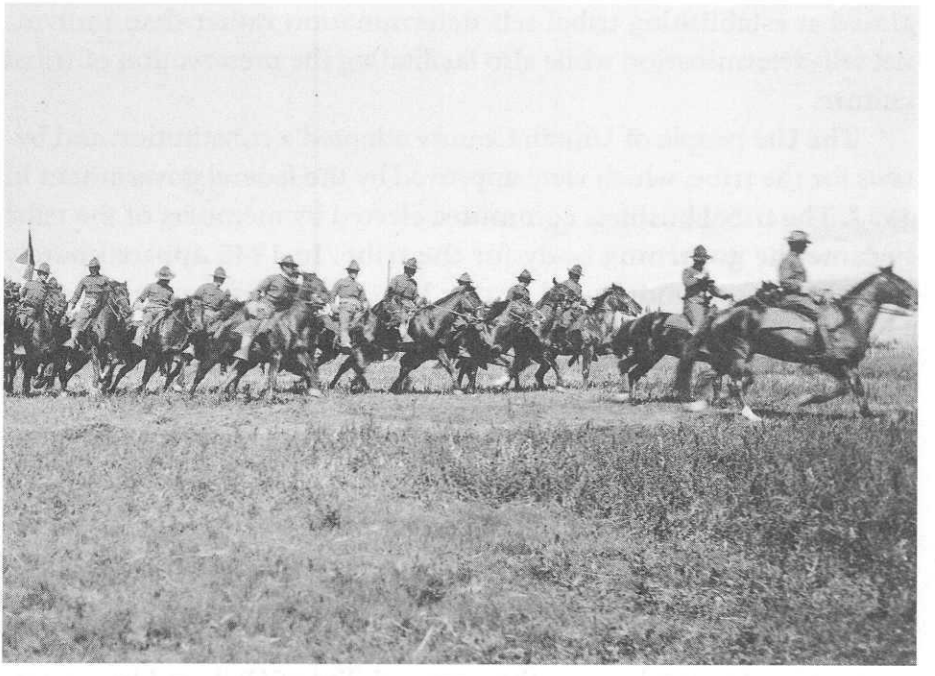
aimed at establishing tribal self-determination rather than individual self-determination while also facilitating the preservation of tribal culture.

The Ute people of Uintah County adopted a constitution and bylaws for the tribe, which were approved by the federal government in 1937. The tribal business committee elected by members of the tribe became the governing body for the tribe. In 1945 approximately 217,000 acres of undisposed former Uintah Reservation land located in Duchesne and Uintah counties was restored to the ownership of the Ute Tribe.

Early in the 1950s federal Indian policy was changed once again, to one labeled termination. The law now attempted to end the special relationship of Indians and the federal government by placing more responsibility for the assimilation of Indian people in the hands of the states. This policy required the county's Utes to be fully integrated into the legal system of whites, abiding by all the laws of the state of Utah. The health, safety, education, and economic development of the Indians became the responsibility of Utah and local communities. This new policy was strongly favored and promoted by Utah senator Arthur V. Watkins.

The policy of termination was reversed in the early 1960s and Congress reestablished the special federal-Indian relationship. Since the 1960s the specific status of the Ute people and the Uintah-Ouray Reservation has been in a state of flux. In certain matters, Congress has chosen to exert its authority; in other matters, it has ceded some of the responsibility to the state of Utah. The results have left some confusion regarding the jurisdiction of legal authority and the management of the land and resources among the Ute tribe, the federal government, and state and local governments.

By 1960 the Ute Tribe was beginning to assert its independence and power. The discovery of oil beneath their land increased their power. The impact of this reawakening led to litigation in the 1980s regarding whether Indian self-determination or general community determination would control future county land-use planning and development. The Utes consider themselves a sovereign nation and want control of all law enforcement inside the original reservation boundaries. They also believe they should not have to pay sales tax in



Fort Duchesne cavalry. (UCLRHC, C. J. Neal Collection)

any store inside this boundary. Cases have gone into lengthy court battles, and solutions to these problems will be slow in coming.

Present law-enforcement agencies of Uintah County have their own jurisdiction and offices, although the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) uses the Uintah County jail. The Ute Indian Tribe has a holding facility where prisoners are lodged until dealt with either by the tribal judge or a federal judge in Salt Lake City. If the Indian prisoner is convicted by a federal judge, he is sent to a federal penitentiary. The different entities are in charge of crimes arising in their jurisdiction but call on each other for assistance, if necessary. All peace officers are required to be certified by the State of Utah. Any officer viewing a crime being committed anywhere in Utah can legally make an arrest. Until recently, all officers including the BIA police were cross-deputized; presently the Utah Police Officers Standards & Training (POST) office requires BIA officers to attend POST classes and the BIA requires all officers to attend BIA training. At present BIA peace officers are the lead agency handling offenses on Indian trust ground.

The Uintah County sheriff's department handles whites on tribal land and endeavors to work with the BIA when in pursuit of Indian malefactors.

A U.S. Supreme Court ruling of 1994 (*Hagen v. Utah*) has complicated law enforcement in the Uinta Basin by holding that white officers cannot arrest Indians on tribal ground. County attorneys in Uintah and Duchesne counties, however, have made the judgement that officers should make arrests for all felonies and misdemeanors on non-deeded ground regardless of whether the suspects are Indian or white. The problem is that officers do not know where non-deeded and deeded ground lines lie. Maps are being used by the officers, but deeded and non-deeded lands are like a checkerboard. Despite these obstacles, law-enforcement officers from both the BIA and the Uintah County sheriff's department endeavor to make Uintah County a safe place to live.

ENDNOTES

1. *Laws of Utah*, 1880, lists Jeremiah Hatch as the first Uintah County court judge. Uintah County minutes lists the names of the first selectmen but refers to the appointed judge only as Judge Hatch, giving no first name. *Inventory of the County Archives of Utah, Uintah County,* lists the name of the judge as A.C. Hatch, and this error has been carried to other publications. In 1896 A.C. Hatch did become judge of the 4th Judicial District which included Vernal.

2. *Inventory of the County Archives of Utah, Uintah County* (32) states that the first probate judge to be elected was Isaac Burton and that Thomas Bingham was a selectman. However, a close reading of the county minutes reveals that Thomas Bingham was the first judge and Burton was a selectman. Burton did step in for Bingham and complete his term.

3. Sterling Driggs and Nancy Adeline Wilkins Colton history, unpublished manuscript, copy located in Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 829. County selectmen minutes for 1880 also indicate Gibson and Lycurgus Johnson receiving money for boarding prisoners in their homes.

4. Uintah County Selectmen minutes, 6 June 1887.

5. See Doris Burton, *Silver Stars and Jail Bars: An Account of Uintah County Sheriffs*, (Salt Lake City: K/P Graphics, 1987), 1–2.

6. Ray Haueter, "Early Law Enforcement," *Utah Peace Officers Association* (magazine exerpt, no other information available), 22–24; *An*

Historical and Biographical Record of the Sterling Driggs Colton Family, Descendants and Related Families (S.D. Colton Family Organization, 1977), 11. Other versions of how and where the prisoner was shot can be found in Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 829.

7. See Uintah County Library folder 829, particularly Hauter, "Early Law Enforcement," 22–24.

8. David Rasmussen went to prison for one year. James McKee, Robert Atwood, and Charles Atwood also served time in the penitentiary. See *Vernal Express*, 7 January, 14 January, 18 February, 25 February, 4 March, 10 June 1897, and 21 April 1898.

9. Irvin Haws, manager of the local J. C. Penney store, found the sales slip with the serial number on it. Haws still has the sales slip in his possession.

10. Ashley Bartlett, unpublished manuscript in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 725.

11. Evelyn Peavy Semontan, ed., "Anne Bassett," an account of Bassett from a diary and manuscripts written by Anne Bassett Willis, in possession of the Colorado Historical Society journal.

12. Pope's granddaughters told the author this postcard was placed in the Daughters of Utah Pioneers museum in Salt Lake City along with a gold badge presented to Sheriff Pope by the governor of Utah. See also E. Dixon Larson, "Sheriff Pope Stood Tall Against Butch Cassidy," *Gun Week*, 16 January 1981.

13. Lora Sannes, "The Last Cowboy Sheriff: A History of John Theodore Pope" (the story of Sheriff Pope as he told it to Ms. Sannes in 1939), unpublished manuscript, copy located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 3071.

14. Ibid.

15. John Bascom, telephone interview with author, 5 March 1995.

16. Accounts of this incident are located in Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folders 967 and 3075, along with a tape recording made by one of the deputies with the posse.

17. *Vernal Express*, 21 April 1898.

18. Information obtained by Richard Horton from Mark Setright and Tena Hill at the Wyoming Frontier Prison on 1 March 1995; see also Elnora L. Frye, *Atlas of Wyoming Outlaws at the Territorial Penitentiary* (Cheyenne, WY: Frye, 1990), 189.

19. See Sannes, "The Last Cowboy Sheriff"; no known arrests were made for this crime.

20. Gary Lee Walker, "A History of Fort Duchesne, Including Fort Thornburgh," Ph.D. diss., Brigham Young University, 1992, 233.

21. *Vernal Express,* 5 November and 26 November 1909.

22. Ibid., 4 April 1913.

23. Ibid., 2 May 1929.

24. Harold Workman, personal interview with author, 12 July 1993. See also, for example, *Vernal Express,* 17 October, 28 November 1919, 25 June 1920, 5 August 1921, 6 July 1923, 9 May 1924, and 13 August 1926; consult *Vernal Express* Index in UCL Regional History Center for additional information.

25. See *Outlaw Trail History Journal* (Summer 1994), available in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

26. *Vernal Express,* 12 April, 13 June, and 6 December 1912.

27. Vernal City Minutes, 4 January 1950; *Vernal Express,* 5 January 1950.

28. Figures obtained in April 1996 from Ron Tollefson, chief probation officer at the Uintah County Juvenile Court.

29. See Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indian* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

30. See U. S. Department of the Interior, Office of Indian Affairs, *Annual Reports* (1800–1904).

31. *Vernal Express,* 24 February 1906, states that an Indian named Colorow was arrested at Ouray by the Indian police and then turned over to the sheriff for prosecution of assault with intent to kill a white farmer. Fourth District Court Docket no. 128 lists a Henry Johnson (an Indian) as being before the court for the rape of Lucille Pierce (a white woman). Court records located in Records Room, Uintah County Courthouse, Vernal, Utah.

14

For the Good of All

COMMUNITY SERVICES

The majority of the settlers of Ashley Center (Vernal) were Mormons, and the site where the original fort had been located was owned by church member David Johnstun, who had granted power of attorney to the Mormon church. Church officials held a meeting on 13 September 1884 in which a motion was made that a townsite be located on the old fort site. The motion carried and eight men were placed on a committee to set prices on the city lots. The townsite was surveyed on 7 March 1885.[1] The town organization was established in 1893.

Four years later, in 1897, after meeting the legal requirements for filing and advertising, a proposition to incorporate Vernal as a third-class city was placed on the ballot. On 2 November the proposal passed, with a vote of 129 for and 15 against. S.M. Browne was elected mayor, defeating S.P. Dillman by a count of 102 to 57 votes. John Pope was elected marshal with 153 votes; his opponents, Jeff Wilcox and William Preece, received one vote each.[2] From that point on Vernal operated as a city with a mayor, not as a town with a board

of trustees. Incorporation proceedings were signed by the secretary of state on 28 December 1897.

For some unknown reason, the city went through the incorporation process again after a petition was signed on 5 August 1907 by more than one hundred real property taxpayers asking that Vernal be incorporated as a city of the third class. All qualifications were met and the commissioners approved and resolved that the matter would be placed on the 5 November ballot.[3] It passed, and John K. Bullock was elected mayor. The commissioners met on 6 January 1908 and adopted the resolution, and on 20 February 1908 the city was *reincorporated,* according to wording on the state record.

Through the years county and city governments have accepted responsibility to provide diverse services to the constantly growing and changing population of the county. Many of these public services are examined in this chapter.

Uintah County Library

Soon after the turn of the century, a move was made to secure a library for Vernal City. In March 1902, after much work by the women's Thalia Club, a petition was signed by county and city officers and sent to national philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, who had helped establish other libraries in the state, asking for a donation of $3,000 to establish a public library in Vernal. The request was turned down, as were numerous subsequent requests.

Other clubs began offering assistance to fund a library, however. At a public meeting held in the social hall on 17 March 1908, a library association was formed, with seven people selected to serve as a board of directors. Charles DeMoisy was elected chairman, with Don B. Colton, vice-chairman; Alta Newcomb, secretary, and Frank M. Young, treasurer. Plans were made to purchase books, magazines, and furniture for the library with the donations that had been collected. The library was to be housed in the south wing of a building owned by the Dillman family which was located on the west side of South Vernal Avenue. In April, Mina (Mrs. Leon) Pack was appointed librarian, and the library opened on 15 April with 300 volumes of books, numerous magazines, and various newspapers. Many visitors

brought donations of books, money, and furniture to the grand opening.

The library made many moves before arriving at its present location. From South Vernal Avenue, the library was moved to the old rock tithing building on North Vernal Avenue in 1909.[4] In September of that year Bertha (Mrs. L. N.) Meredith became librarian. By December 1910 it was decided that the city of Vernal would take over the public library and expenses would be paid out of city taxes. As this was a city library, only Vernal City residents were allowed to use it. In 1912 the by-laws were changed so that any person residing outside Vernal limits could use the library for an annual fee of one dollar. An average of 255 children and seventy-five adults were using the library weekly, and up to 150 books were checked out or mailed out each day.

More suitable quarters were needed for the library by 1914, but city revenues were inadequate to pay an increased rent. A number of women began holding a series of teas to raise money for the library. Members from the library board, Thalia Club, Current Topics Club, and the Silver Tea Club were appointed to a committee to find a new location, and in 1915 the library was moved to 54 West Main. The next April the library was again moved, across the street to 81 West Main.

Headlines in the 13 June 1917 *Vernal Express* read, "Steps Taken to Secure Big $50,000 County Library." A bill made it possible to set a special county mill levy to provide funds which Carnegie grant funds would match—ten dollars to every one dollar raised by Uintah County. Carnegie officials had maintained that there were not enough patrons in Vernal to warrant a library building, so in April 1920 it was decided to change the city library to a county facility. It was believed that a special tax levy of $5,000—when used with Carnegie matching funds—would give the county a splendid library. However, Carnegie funds were not granted. A new library board was selected and Merle Massey became county librarian. In 1932 Elizabeth Manker became librarian. The book collection had grown from 300 to 4,690 volumes. The library was overcrowded, and it was also housing pioneer artifacts which the Daughters of Utah Pioneers had collected. No restroom facilities were available, a cold water tap

could only be used during summer months, and lighting was inadequate for reading. A pool hall was next door and parents were concerned about letting their children go to the library. Inebriated persons occasionally staggered into the library by mistake.

Through the years continual attempts were made to obtain a better location for the library. A drive was initiated in 1931 without success. The city continued to work with the county on the library and the mayor served on the library board. In 1937 the local paper reported a $27,000 city hall would be constructed in the fall as a WPA project, but the project never materialized and the library seemed doomed never to have a permanent home. In 1948 it was decided to move the library to the Central School building.

Elizabeth Manker retired in May 1948 and Crystal (Mrs. Charles) Lewis replaced her as librarian. Lewis served for six years, resigning in May 1954. Marge Hislop Eaton replaced her on 1 June 1954.

The library board purchased property for the site of a new library building, but when the county wanted this property for the Golden Age Center, the library was paid for the site and the money was placed in a library fund. LeOra Jacobe became the new librarian on 8 August 1956, and two major library building programs were undertaken during the twenty years she served. The library finally achieved its goal of a new building when the second courthouse was begun in 1958. A small library sixty feet by twenty feet connected to the east side of the building was dedicated 30 June 1959. The library had outgrown this space by 1975, and, through a state library grant, a large addition was constructed to the east and dedicated on 11 September 1975.

In February 1961 a contract was signed with the state library commission to provide Bookmobile services to outlying areas in Uintah County. In 1962 the Rotary Club organized a birthday club in which each member pledged five dollars to the library on his birthday to buy a book of interest to men or boys. The amount was later increased to ten dollars. Over the twenty-year period of this project, about 1,000 books were purchased at a cost of more than $10,000.

In 1976 LeOra Jacobe retired and Doris Karren Burton was appointed librarian. An ambitious children's program was developed. Story hour grew, with up to 130 children over age six attending in the

new multipurpose room weekly. Younger children also had a special story hour. Burton arranged and taught art classes and writing seminars. Under her leadership, the library became a center for those interested in fine arts, with monthly art shows and poetry meetings. Display cases were filled with local collections. In 1982 Burton opened the Regional History Center. In addition to collecting local histories, newspapers, and photographs, the center and its staff have undertaken significant programs to preserve the history of the region.

Shortly after being named county historian in 1982, Burton was replaced as librarian by Creed Kidd. Evan Lewis Baker was appointed librarian later in 1982, and, under Baker's direction, the library computer catalog was improved and adult programs were added. In 1990 a 5,600–square-foot expansion was made to the library, providing increased space for the children's section and the Regional History Center. Baker has been able to obtain many grants for the library.

The Historic Preservation Program was established by William Jolley in 1984 to identify and preserve the many historic sites in the county. Under the direction of Burton with grants received, the *Vernal Express* from 1891 through 1943 has been indexed by Joy and Richard Horton, and the project continues, making the newspaper more accessible to researchers. A third important project in which the Regional Center is involved is the publication of the *Outlaw Trail History Journal*, first published in 1991.

Two permanent collections are on display in the library. The First Lady Doll Collection was a project of the local national-bicentennial committee in 1976; bicentennial chairman was Marguerite Colton and doll-committee chairman was Isobel Batty. The second collection is a group of historic oil paintings collected by David Arnsbrak through a humanities grant obtained by librarian Doris Burton. The Uintah County Library is considered one of the best in the state for its size. Its collection now contains 64,000 items, and the library is in need of more space. Expansion at the present site is infeasible, so residents await future developments.

Welfare and Public Health

Welfare for those in need was begun when the county was established in 1880 and consisted mainly of medical assistance to the poor,



Public Health office about 1919. (UCLRHC, L. C. Thorne collection)

pensions for dependent widowed mothers, care of the old, care of indigents, and burial of paupers.[5] Federal welfare relief began in the county in 1932 with the organization of an emergency relief committee under President Herbert Hoover's Wagonor Act organizing the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC). Uintah County's emergency relief committee dispersed funds to needy families. It soon became apparent that providing assistance for the needy would be a major endeavor. In May 1933 New Deal programs were created to provide or channel federal money to state relief committees which in turn allocated the funds to the various counties. Local committees retained responsibility for seeing that funds were honestly and effectively administered, but workers were employed to investigate the needs of members of the community who applied for help. In 1935 the state legislature provided for the establishment of state and county departments of public welfare to coordinate the welfare functions in the counties of the state. A department of public welfare was organized in Uintah County following this legislation. It was charged with administration of all forms of public assistance in the county, including relief for persons in need, old-age assistance, aid to dependent children, aid to the blind and otherwise handicapped, care of

dependent, neglected, delinquent, or handicapped children, and burial of deceased recipients.

In 1937 the Uintah County Department of Welfare added child-welfare services to its program. These services were made available through funds appropriated for this purpose by the Social Security Act. In 1940 the county welfare department was licensed to place children in foster homes.

In the 1960s administration of public-welfare programs became largely a function of the state Department of Social Services, which has undergone many changes through the years. For a time a local county commissioner sat on the advisory boards, but today commissioners have no role in state and federal programs. A small fund is maintained at the local level for indigent transients and others who do not qualify for other programs. A food pantry program which is funded through state and private contributions is operated in Uintah County.

Public health is one of the most critical matters addressed by local government; it includes the prevention of epidemics, the control of disease and the promotion of good health. Records of early county involvement in public health are sparse. The county court appointed Doctor Harvey Coe Hullinger as quarantine officer in November 1887 during a measles epidemic, and he was also physician for the poor. Prior to 1887 records indicate that the sheriff on occasion acted as sanitation officer in attempts to keep water unpolluted.

On 8 March 1889 county commissioners passed an ordinance providing for the establishment of sanitary districts and the appointment of health officers. Provisions were made for a county board of health comprised of the county commissioners and designated health officers. This board was to be responsible for supervising sanitary conditions, enforcing quarantine regulations, and managing all other aspects of public health. The Uintah Sanitary District was formed with Dr. Archimedes Rose as its head. As county physician, Rose was also appointed to care for the indigent and enforce quarantine regulations. During a diphtheria outbreak in 1897, people of Ashley Valley voiced concern and pointed out the need for a quarantine doctor to serve countywide.

A smallpox epidemic broke out in 1902. The disease had been lingering in the valley for several weeks but was so mild it was not recognized until Rose recognized the disease as smallpox. He put out a yellow quarantine flag; but Drs. Albert Bjornson and Harvey Coe Hullinger disagreed, claiming it was only the German measles. To settle the dispute, Mayor Browne and the county commissioners telephoned for the military post doctor, who arrived and also pronounced it smallpox. Quarantine flags flew all over the county and rigid steps were taken to enforce the quarantine. Schools and public meetings were discontinued and mail leaving Vernal was fumigated every night.

On 16 April 1902 Vernal City followed the county's lead and passed an ordinance to establish a board of health consisting of three people, including a physician, if possible. The city board of health considered vaccination so important it made special arrangements with the city physician to vaccinate all school children within the city limits free of charge. Dr. F.C. Buchtel was secured as the city physician and an office was set up in the Cottage Hotel.

When the national influenza epidemic broke out locally in 1918–19, city and county boards of health put a notice in the newspaper listing many rules, including every person entering a store or public building had to wear a protective mask over the nose and mouth, and two or more people congregating on the public streets had to wear masks; eight other rules completed the list.[6] The epidemic was so severe that the Red Cross secured the services of registered nurse Stella Sainsbury to care for the ill. She rode a horse from house to house to offer aid. Later Sainsbury became Uintah School District's first nurse.

In 1927 the state superintendent of schools demanded that every school district with 1,500 or more students have a school nurse available to monitor children's health. Local physicians gave yearly physical exams to the children. It took a scarlet fever epidemic in 1928 to start up public health nursing again. The local Red Cross gained the services of Dorothy Mc Carrell. In 1933 nurse Grace Lambert called a mass meeting of citizens at the courthouse to reorganize the Health Center Club in Uintah County. In 1934 a medical relief program was authorized—each county was assigned one nurse who was paid from

state funds. Mary Tess Murphy, R.N., was appointed public nurse for Uintah County, and one of her jobs was to teach people to help themselves. She also organized baby clinics in the outlying areas. Murphy contacted every school in Uintah County and helped doctors inoculate the children for typhoid fever. She also provided bedside nursing to the sick who could not afford regular medical care.[7]

Recognizing the need to better promote public-health objectives, the Utah State Board of Health, the Uintah County Board of Education, and the Uintah County Board of Commissioners in 1935 employed a second nurse, Jane Loftus, to assist in promoting health in Uintah County. These nurses taught hygiene to children and adults, worked through the schools to maintain physical and mental efficiency, made school inspections to educate the children in the control of communicable diseases, and located children with physical defects. The value of good health habits was emphasized. Besides these services, the nurses participated in planning health programs for the schools, the community, and the county. First-aid classes also were taught.

In 1939 the Uintah Public Health Department was located in the first courthouse building and employed one public-health nurse, Jane Loftus. Naomi Zundell followed; she was succeeded by Ruth Wood and then Nettie Remington. In 1945 the department employed two nurses—Helen Stevens was hired to work with Nettie Remington. Remington retired 23 June 1952 and Alta Rust took her place. Rust organized the first mental-health clinic and brought in orthopedic surgeons several times a year. Marilyn Thacker took over from Rust and worked with Helen Walker, who replaced Helen Stevens in 1965. When polio vaccine became available in March 1963, the health department held a clinic at the Uintah County Courthouse; 15,918 doses of vaccine were administered. The county's first male nurse, James Brown, took Walker's position in 1974, and Charlene F. Currie came on staff..

In 1978 a new phase of public-health service opened when Uintah Basin Public Health Department was organized to serve three counties—Uintah, Duchesne, and Daggett—with an office in the basement of the new Uintah County Courthouse. At that time Lulu W. Stewart took James Brown's place and Nancy Arnold came on

staff. In 1981 Mary Ellen Connor became district nurse supervisor. In 1986 the offices were expanded and new programs were added, including the Children at Risk program and the Women's Health Resource Center. The Uintah Basin Public Health Department currently offers extensive programs, special contract services, and intensive personal and professional development courses.

A nine-person board of health governs the Uintah Basin Public Health Department; it includes commissioners from the three counties and several doctors and dentists. The department provides four offices—the home office in Vernal and offices in Manila, Duchesne, and Roosevelt. Joseph Shaffer currently is the director and heads thirty employees.

A mosquito problem was addressed in the 1970s. Clouds of mosquitoes had plagued the citizens of Uintah County, its visitors, and long-suffering livestock for years. Massive amounts of mosquito repellent were used and, in parts of the county, veiled hats were commonplace. The vast geographic area of the county supported extensive mosquito breeding grounds. In 1974 a citizens' committee was appointed and spearheaded by Wiley E. Stewart, a Jensen cattle rancher, and Vaughn Hunsaker, county extension agent. Petitions were circulated and a successful appeal made to the Uintah County commissioners. The Uintah County Mosquito Abatement District was created by order of the commissioners on 5 August 1974.

Organized mosquito-control procedures were commenced for the first time in Uintah County on 14 May 1975 under the direction of Dr. Steven Romney, an entomologist who had been employed as district director. Along with Romney, the Uintah County Mosquito Abatement District commenced its first operations with four seasonal employees. Cumulative field work and comprehensive mapping of aquatic mosquito sources throughout the county eventually identified mosquito-infested areas totaling 1,000 square miles. The current (1994) resources of the district which are now employed in countywide mosquito control include Director Romney, assistant director Randel Sessions, and ten highly trained seasonal field technicians. The district has expanded the scope of its program to encompass the local control of other economically and medically important insects in addition to mosquitoes.

Pharamacies and Druggists

Druggists had an important role in the development of health programs in Uintah county and were looked upon with high esteem, many being social and political leaders. Peter Dillman owned the first drug store, which opened in 1886 on South Vernal Avenue. In 1888 Dillman built a larger drug and merchandise store, and in 1892 he sold the drug store to Dr. W.H. Parks, who changed the name to Pioneer Drug. The City Drug Store was opened in 1893 by Will Britt and Edward F. Harmston in a little building on Main Street. In 1896 Harmston sold his share in that company and opened the Harmston Drug Store. The same year W.S. Ashton, James Shaffer, and A.C. Emert bought out Harmston's inventory and began the Vernal Drug Store, staying in the same building until 1897 when it was moved to a new two-story brick building at 4 West Main. Vernal Drug Store was incorporated in 1907 and moved to the Calder Building. Its next move was into a new building next to the new Uintah State Bank in 1917. The Vernal Drug store had been in operation longer than any other county drug store when it ceased operation in October 1991. R.C. Cooper, one of its owners, served as mayor from 1926 to 1929. He was again elected in 1932, serving until 1941.

A LaPoint drug store was operated by L.A Holdridge and later purchased by Pete Harrison. In recent years large chain stores including Skaggs (Osco), IGA, Smiths, Wal Mart, and K-Mart have moved to Vernal and opened pharmacies, resulting in the demise of the smaller, independent drug stores.[8]

Dentists

Before Uintah County had professional dentists, Vernal blacksmith Curt Hadlock removed teeth. The first area dentist was Dr. Nancy Haws, who came in 1889. Doctor Charles E. Hirth arrived in 1900 and was Vernal's main dentist until 1939. A local man, Wallace S. Calder, practiced in Vernal from 1932 to 1941. Other long-time dentists were J. W. Stevens and Lloyd Shimmins, who practiced thirty-four and forty years respectively. Shimmins's son, John, became a dentist in 1950 and still practices in 1995, making him the longest practicing dentist. Dan Q. Price practiced for thirty-four



Doctor Sawtell, first Indian Service doctor in Ouray and one of the first in Whiterocks (UCLRHC collection)

years. Many dentists now practice in Vernal; a complete list is on file in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

Doctors and Hospitals

Doctors and hospitals were slow in coming to Ashley Valley. Wilbur Carlton Britt, one of the first settlers arriving in 1873, had attended medical school for one year and helped in emergencies as town doctor, dentist, and druggist. A physician was stationed at

Whiterocks at the Uintah Indian Agency in 1883.[9] In 1886 Pete Dillman, who operated the Dillman Drug Store, realized how badly a doctor was needed, and on his next trip to Salt Lake City to purchase drugs he inquired if the salesman knew a doctor who might be willing to come to Vernal and set up a practice. The salesman suggested a Dr. Gardner, stating, "He likes whiskey but if he can be kept away from it, he's a fine physician." Dillman looked up the doctor, who was willing to come to Ashley Valley. Gardner was only in Ashley a couple of years before his old habit of drinking became uncontrollable and he returned to Salt Lake; however, he had taught Dillman much about drugs and Dillman continued to provide medicine for the sick.[10]

The second doctor, W.H. Parks, mysteriously appeared in Vernal in 1888. He set up office in Dillman's Drug Store, which he bought a year later. According to Dillman's life history, Parks was not only a doctor but a detective who was sent to Vernal to investigate the death of a young man named Seymour who was murdered near the settlement.[11]

Dr. P.H. Butler came to Vernal in 1891 and opened an office in the dental parlor of Nancy Haws; however, in September 1892 Butler committed suicide. The same month news was received that Dr. Harvey Coe Hullinger was building a house and planning to practice in Vernal. He began his practice in Vernal in October 1893. Dr. Hullinger practiced medicine in Vernal for thirty-three years, until just a few months before his death in January 1926 at 101 years of age.

Dr. Manfred R. Martin set up practice in 1908, and in 1909 he was joined by Dr. G. Bowers. Martin later moved his office to a house at 163 North Vernal Avenue which he built in 1912. He remained in Vernal until his death of a heart ailment in 1916.

Dr. John H. Clark came to Vernal in 1935 and practiced there until he left for military service in February 1941. He was discharged a lieutenant colonel in 1945, having been awarded the Purple Heart. He never returned to Vernal, but many of his old patients went to him when he set up a practice in Salt Lake City. Dr. Weldon Bullock was the first local to become a doctor and to practice in Vernal. He was the son of J.K. Bullock, a prominent businessman. The Uintah



Pioneer Doctor Harvey Coe Hullinger seated at his typewriter in front of medicine cabinet still practicing medicine at 100 years of age (UCLRHC collection)

Railway and the Gilson-Asphaltum companies retained doctors at Dragon, Utah, and the Indian agency at Whiterocks provided a doctor.

In 1950 Dr. Jane Fowler, the only woman doctor besides Maude Garrett-O'Donnell to practice in Vernal, arrived with her husband, Dr. Herbert Fowler. She always dressed well, making the statement that just because she worked in a man's world did not mean she had to look like one. Dr. Bruce Christan came to Vernal and set up practice about 1954.

In 1977 four physicians practiced in the community—James Allen, Tyrrell Seager, Paul Stringham, and Ray Spendlove. Dr. Spendlove practiced in Vernal for forty years, from 1946 to 1986, longer than any other doctor at the present time, and was known as the singing doctor because he sang in the hospital while he worked and at numerous church and civic functions. Dr. Seager, who practiced in Vernal for thirty years, was gruff-mannered but one of the best physicians and surgeons in the state. Allen arrived in the Uinta Basin in 1970 to work for the Indian Health Service. In 1972 he set up a practice in Vernal and continues to serve the residents of the basin. Raised in Fort Duchesne, he has won many awards for calf roping and other events in professional rodeos. Dr. Stringham is another local who became a doctor and returned to treat the people of his hometown. Stringham began his practice in Roosevelt in 1950 and moved to Vernal in 1962, practicing in the basin for thirty-nine years. In 1984 Dr. Stringham received the A.H. Robbins Award for Community Service awarded by the Utah State Medical Association. He retired in 1989, at which time his nephew Karl Breitenbach took over his practice. Another local who set up a practice in Vernal is Rodney Anderson, who works with Breitenbach.

Many doctors have served Uintah County through the years. Some are mentioned in the following stories. Expanded stories and a complete list of all the doctors known to have practiced in the county can be found in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

The early doctors arriving in Uintah County dealt with many hardships. It was necessary to travel great distances on poor wagon roads. Epidemics of diphtheria, scarlet fever, and typhoid fever occurred which many of the doctors did not recognize or know how to treat other than to quarantine the homes. Medical equipment was minimal and doctors had to work with makeshift tools. The flu epidemic of 1918–19 took the lives of dentist Edwin Tolhurst and

undertaker Elmer Dillman. No hospitals existed and doctors were forced to provide operating rooms in their offices.

A smallpox epidemic broke out on the Indian reservation in 1902. Almost every family was affected, and as many as three in one family died in one day. With local doctors unable to cope with the situation, a call was made to Denver for help, guaranteeing the expenses of a doctor with medical knowledge. Dr. F.C. Buchtel, who had just graduated from Denver University, accepted the challenge. No antitoxin was available to the local medical men, but Dr. Buchtel brought a large supply with him and soon had the epidemic under control. He set up his office in the Cottage Hotel on the corner of 100 North and Vernal Avenue.

The first woman physician to arrive in Vernal was Dr. Maude A. Garrett from Denver. Dr. Buchtel's practice had increased to the point he could not handle it alone. He had attended school with Maude Garrett and invited her to join his practice. Dr. Garrett married a local attorney, Thomas O'Donnell. She owned the area's first x-ray machine and practiced in Vernal for twenty-four years. She was a petite woman and not physically strong, and she seemed to have more trouble and excitement than many when it came to horses, wagons, and early automobiles. Many stories are told of her adventures.

Dr. Homer E. Rich came to practice medicine in Vernal in August 1911. In 1912 a tragedy occurred when he was called to perform an operation at Roosevelt and lost his way. He rode around all night trying to reach Roosevelt. When day finally broke, he rushed to Roosevelt only to reach his destination two hours after the patient had passed away.[12]

In 1918 four area doctors—Green, Christy, Rich, and Cruikshank—were called to enter the military service in World War I. Dr. Jacob Marion Francke was asked to come to Vernal as a replacement. When Dr. Francke cleaned out Green's desk, he found the following written on a prescription pad, revealing the makeshift tools and operating conditions of the early doctors:

> Upon a recent call to the mountains I found a boy nine years old who had been kicked in the head by a horse behind the right

> ear. Blood oozing from the ears and mouth. The cranial bones of right side of back of head a crushed mass. Pulse slow and irregular, breathing stertorous, everything looked black for the little fellow. My surgical kit consisted of hemostat, scalpel, scissors, probe, one small saw, one envelope cat gut and linners sutures. Bone instruments must be improvised for we were thirty miles from assistance. Fortunately Mr. Hardy found for me 1 cold chissel [*sic*], 1 monkey wrench, screw driver and Mr. P. Dodds furnished 1 pair of heavy pliers.
>
> I arrived at the place one of Uncle Sam's forest stations at 11 P.M. I put the instruments off to steralize [*sic*] and sat down for refreshments after which real work commenced. With Mrs. Dodds as anesthetist and Mrs. Hardy as my assistant, we had our little patient's skull elavated [*sic*] and dressed and had him resting in bed at 1 A.M.

Drs. Francke and Garrett-O'Donnell and nurse Stella Sansbury took care of the needs of Vernal and most of the surrounding areas during this time, undergoing many hardships. Francke had played professional football to finance his medical studies.

Dr. George H. Christy had arrived in Vernal in February 1907, beginning a thirty-year practice. In July he became associated with Dr. Maude Garrett-O'Donnell. About this time differences between the various doctors in Vernal arose and two medical contingents emerged. Drs. Christy and Garrett-O'Donnell practiced on the north side of the street, supporting the Vernal Drug in which they owned stock. Drs. Bowers and Martin practiced on the south, supporting the Walter Lloyd Drug Company (later the Uintah Drug). Eventually the physicians of Vernal gave up their rivalry and formed the Uintah County Medical Society, which received its charter on 24 September 1912. A uniform price list was compiled and a monthly meeting was planned to discuss difficult cases and matters of mutual concern. The city passed an ordinance establishing the salary of the city physician at $120 per annum. Cost for an office call was set at two dollars, although payment was most often made with hay, grain, or other commodities.

In October 1911, after Dr. Homer Rich had arrived, he joined with other doctors in trying to get community support for a hospital.

Little support was received, however. Probably one reason the two factions resolved their differences and joined together in the medical society in 1912 was to gather community support. Local government support for a county hospital was long in coming. The state legislature passed a bill in 1917 permitting a board of county commissioners to levy a tax to establish a public hospital upon receiving petitions signed by 20 percent of the resident taxpayers. The issue could then be put on a special election ballot. A movement to hold such an election in the county was unsuccessful.

Most medical care was provided in the patient's home before hospitals, and the first so-called hospitals were established in homes. Out-of-town patients were housed in hotels. Individuals with a spare bedroom were often called upon to donate the space to make an operating room for some emergency. The first known hospital in the county was in Glines. Nancy Jane Hamilton had married Joseph S. Nielsen, and an elegant new home was built. After the couple divorced on 6 May 1904, Hamilton moved into a cabin behind the new home, turned the big house into a hospital, and began her career of nursing. The hospital was named the Vernal Hospital, and the parlor with its fancy stained glass window became the operating room. Hamilton had no professional training, but Dr. Maude Garrett-O'Donnell trained her. She was given a license to administer shots to patients, deliver babies, and care for the mothers. She married George William Summers on 11 October 1904 and left Vernal for a while. In 1909 she returned and placed an ad in the newspaper, under the name N.J. Summers, stating she would have the hospital open on 3 December. She continued to run the hospital until 1911, when she sold the property.[13]

The Uintah County Medical Society continued to work for a hospital in Vernal and in 1913 the medical society was successful in converting the second floor of the Johnson Building into a hospital. It consisted of an operating room, a sterilizing room, laboratory, two private rooms, a kitchen, an emergency bedroom, and a ward. These hospital facilities were for the use of all area physicians. The walls of the operating room were hung with white oilcloth up to five feet high and sealed with glazed paper. The chairs and other furniture were

painted with hard white enamel to make everything as clean and sanitary as possible. It is uncertain how long this hospital functioned.

In 1914 doctors Christy and Rich opened a hospital. Frank Watkins owned the cement-block building. One long operating room was made. The hospital was discontinued in 1917, although Frank Watkin's wife, Isabel, used the two north rooms to care for new mothers.

In January 1916 Mr. and Mrs. A.O. Marshall opened a hospital at a home at 163 North 500 West; it also took the name of the Vernal Hospital. Others later took over the hospital. Emma Beach then ran the hospital until March 1919 when she closed it.

In February 1917 doctors Rich, Christy, and Garrett-O'Donnell moved into the new Uintah State Bank building. In 1916 and 1917 additions were made, including in a suite of rooms a laboratory, x-ray room, supply room, and reception rooms and private consultation rooms for each of the three doctors. The suite also included an operating room and was used as a hospital under the auspices of the medical association.

When the terrible flu epidemic broke out in 1918, an emergency hospital was opened in St. Paul's Lodge for treatment of influenza cases. This hospital was operated with the help of volunteers and school teachers acting as nurses. By the end of the year the epidemic had subsided to the point that it was no longer necessary to operate the emergency hospital. However, the flu flared up again in 1919, resulting in the death of sixty-two Indians and forty-five white people. Some Indians believed jumping into the cold river would prevent them from dying of the flu; some drowned and others died of pneumonia

In July 1919 a movement was again started to build a hospital for Uintah County. Vernal was one of the few cities in the state without a county hospital and local doctors banded together to support the idea. In 1919 articles were placed in the newspaper stating that x-ray machines and other equipment which would keep patients alive were not affordable and that a hospital was desperately needed. With the success of the emergency hospital during the flu epidemic, the doctors felt everyone would be willing to work for a county hospital; however, the county commissioners still ignored their demands.

Samuel Joseph and Sadie Campbell opened the first licensed hospital about 1920. It also was called the Vernal Hospital. Sadie was the daughter of Joseph Tolliver, early Vernal marshal. She had always been interested in becoming a nurse, and during her early married life she worked as a midwife and helped with the nursing care of sick people. She worked first with doctors Garrett-O'Donnell and Cruikshank and later with doctors J.M. Francke and George H. Christy, who encouraged her to take nurses' training. She entered the Chicago School of Nursing and became a registered nurse. She and her husband then opened a hospital in their home at 191 North 500 East. The hospital was moved to St. Paul's Lodge in 1928, where it remained until 1931 when a new hospital was built with living quarters on 500 East. The hospital was operated at that location until 1937 when the Campbells retired and moved to Salt Lake. In 1925 Nettie Richens also opened a hospital with an operating room on Main Street.

In 1924, after the chamber of commerce held a mass meeting to secure support for a county hospital, the commissioners discussed the matter. The issue was placed on the ballot that year, but the proposal to bond for $40,000 for the construction of a hospital was defeated. The Lion's Club tried in 1934 to secure government funds for a hospital but had no success.

After the Campbells moved out of St. Paul's Lodge, Ashley Valley Hospital occupied the building under the direction of nurse Sarah B. Pumfrey. On 5 August 1934 nurse Jane Murray took charge of the hospital and changed the name to the Valley Hospital. Murray purchased the equipment from Pumfrey and added six rooms upstairs to the hospital. In the early days of the hospital the nursery bassinets were on shelves on either side of a small closet that was fitted with a glass door. Up to thirteen babies occupied the shelves which rose from waist level toward the ceiling. Until shortly after World War II mothers stayed in the hospital for a ten day rest after giving birth.

In the spring of 1936 Dr. Farley Gilbert Eskelson purchased the Valley Hospital and with extensive remodeling equipped it into a model hospital known as the Valley Hospital and Clinic. X-ray and other equipment became available to all the doctors in Vernal for the first time. The upstairs patients' rooms were accessed by a very steep

ramp. A patient was securely strapped on a stretcher and pushed up the ramp. A large person required six to eight people to accomplish the task. Eskelson began practicing medicine in Vernal in 1932 and built a house to the east of the hospital which he connected to the men's ward. Among the nurses duties was canning fruit and vegetables donated by people or gathered in payment of bills.

Dr. J.L. Hansen of Mt. Pleasant became associated with the hospital when he came to Vernal in 1936. He practiced in Vernal for fourteen years before he was killed in a fall from a horse. He was serving as Vernal's mayor at the time of his death. Also in 1936 doctors John H. Clark and Weldon K. Bullock opened a modern hospital on the upper floor of the Uintah State Bank Building. Doctors J.M. Francke, H.E. Rich, and Victor Prioletti were on the hospital staff along with Clark and Bullock. The following month Bullock received a call to report for military duty, and Dr. Clark purchased his share of the hospital.

In 1939 the two local hospitals were combined when Dr. Clark moved in with Dr. Eskelson. When Clark was called into active duty for the army in 1941, he had to terminate his interest in the hospital. Statements had been made repeatedly in the newspaper through the 1920s that local doctors could no longer serve the poor without compensation and that doctors needed help with expensive new equipment. The 1930s brought changes. Previously, many private individuals and doctors financed and provided their own hospitals; but the county finally came to realize that adequate care could not be provided for residents under these conditions. In March 1941 the county purchased the Eskelson Hospital and changed the name to Uintah County Hospital.

With the oil boom in the mid-1940s, area growth placed a heavy burden on the small hospital. Soon after the end of the war, a campaign was launched to raise funds for a new hospital facility. Because of the farsightedness and generosity of Chinese merchant Wong Sing, a nucleus of a hospital fund was already available. He had left $500 in a trust fund to be used toward building a new hospital. By 1943 this fund had increased to $6,400, largely through the efforts of the Vernal Junior Chamber of Commerce. The chamber had obtained unofficial sanction from city officials to place thirty-seven illegal slot

machines into selected businesses, with the proceeds to go toward building a hospital. These machines were located in the Vernal businesses for two years despite complaints from some neighboring towns. Law-enforcement officials looked the other way until protests mounted, at which time the slot machines were removed. However, the money they raised helped to finally get a new county hospital built.[14] The LDS church donated a site for the building. Other churches, businesses, and social and service clubs also contributed toward the hospital. Construction began in late 1947 and was completed in August 1949. The new facility was approximately 28,000 square feet and was built at a cost of nearly $357,000.

A bond election was held in 1977 to allow the issuance of $2.5 million in general obligation bonds to renovate the hospital. The bond was approved by a wide margin. To help make up the difference between the bond money and the actual cost of the facility, county funds and donations from community organizations, businesses, and individuals raised nearly $110,000 for the new facility. The structure was connected to the west of the existing hospital and was dedicated in July 1980. It added approximately 13,000 square feet to the hospital and allowed the hospital to expand services and offer a better environment. During construction, Hospital Corporation of America (HCA) took over management of the Uintah County Hospital and retained Ronald Perry as administrator. In June 1981 HCA purchased the Uintah County Hospital from the county and renamed the facility Ashley Valley Medical Center. Eventually the facility was staffed with full-time doctors, including doctors Norman Nielson and Larry Wilcken. Some doctors flew in from Salt Lake City on weekends.

In 1985 another 14,000-square-foot addition was made to the hospital; it included a medical office building. Again in 1993 the Ashley Valley Medical Center expanded its facility to meet the medical needs of the community with a 10,000-square-foot addition to the medical office building on the east side of the existing hospital. Today Ashley Valley Medical Center provides excellent medical care to residents and is one of Vernal's largest employers, with approximately 200 employees. In the summer of 1996 the center merged with Columbia Health Services.

Fort Duchesne Hospital first began in the 1880s. Many good doc-

tors practiced there and Vernal people often underwent surgery at that location, including the wife of outlaw and later lawman Matt Warner, who had her leg amputated in 1891. The hospital closed when the soldiers were moved out in 1912. In 1914 a move was initiated to start a hospital for Indians and whites connected to the government, and it was decided that the old fort hospital could be fixed up and used. Dr. Henry P. Lloyd worked there until 1921.

In 1937 a modern Indian hospital was built at Fort Duchesne at a cost of $86,000 as a WPA project. It was comprised of three buildings on a hill overlooking the agency; on either side of the twenty-four-bed hospital were the resident physician's home and the nurse's home. Dr. Charles L. Piper was in charge of this hospital for many years. When Dr. Paul Stringham and his wife arrived in the basin to practice at Roosevelt, he served the hospital as well as his Roosevelt patients. When the government offered public-health service in lieu of army service, the door was opened to many well-trained young physicians who served at the Indian clinic.

The Uintah Care Center was built in 1982 and provides a home for elderly and handicapped people. The management of the care center for the county was provided by a professional management business out of Salem, Oregon. Thirty to forty people staffed the fifty-bed facility when it opened. The center includes an examination room for physicians who see the patients at the center on a regular basis. The facility features a large dining area and recreation center. Jess Faupel was named the first administrator and Rose Simmons is the present administrator. Dr. Stringham served as medical director from the time the center opened until he retired in 1989; he was succeeded by Dr. Breitenbach. On 1 January 1995 Dr. Jon Hughes became the medical director. A wing for a day care facility was added to the south end of the center in 1992. It provides meals, recreation, and supervision during the day for patrons who go home at night. It was built with a Utah Community Development block grant that was matched with county funds. The day care center is licensed for twenty people.

Cemeteries

Cemeteries or graveyards were usually started when a member of a family died and was buried on family property; that site was then

set aside as a family cemetery. Gradually family plots grew into or were replaced with more central cemeteries. As they grew, projects and committees were organized to improve them. In 1915 S.D. Colton, Mrs. John N. Davis, and William M. Anderson were chosen to work toward Vernal cemetery improvements. A letter was written to local state senator Don B. Colton, and eventually a law was enacted allowing county commissioners to levy taxes for the care of cemeteries. The county began to assume the responsibility of operating area cemeteries in 1935. Hugh Colton, county attorney, pointed out to the commissioners that if Uintah County owned the cemeteries it would be possible for them to levy a tax for their upkeep. By a unanimous vote it was decided to levy a small tax for the upkeep of any cemetery in the county that would properly be deeded to the county.

The main problems the county commissioners and cemetery committees had to address were identification of unmarked graves, means of getting water to the cemeteries for beautification, and providing better public access. In 1937 the county commissioners issued an appeal to the public to clean up lots at the cemeteries, and a program of marking the unidentified graves was undertaken. Of the 1,061 graves in the Vernal cemetery at the time, only 269 had markers with distinguishable names. Post cards were sent to more than one hundred lot owners requesting the cooperation of relatives in supplying the names of those buried in these lots in order that the names could be entered in a ground book which Ashley Bartlett was compiling. Wide disagreement occurred among the informants as to the identity of certain graves. Two hundred and fifty unmarked graves still exist in this cemetery, along with many more in other county cemeteries.

The Vernal Cemetery sits on a hill south of town. The first road went into the cemetery from the east and was just a rough road with a gate so the property owner, Winfield S. Hullinger, could bring his cows in and out. A north entrance was built into the cemetery from Vernal Avenue. The road then went up a twenty-foot dugway to the northwest corner of the cemetery. After entering the cemetery at this point, it continued south to meet the east road. It was almost impossible to get up this dugway in the winter, so in 1936 the present road

was built up the south side of the cemetery hill and the north entrance was closed.

When the LaPoint cemetery was laid out, a twelve-foot driveway was left between the blocks. This was sufficient in horse-and-buggy days but had to be enlarged for automobiles. The outside graves had to be moved eighteen feet to allow for a thirty-foot roadway. County cemetery roads have all been improved and most are now paved.

Most of the cemeteries were located in dry, desolate places, and residents had to haul water in buckets to water plants on their family graves. In 1938 the commissioners sponsored a $7,000 WPA project to bring water to the county cemeteries. Cast-iron pipe was laid to convey water to the Vernal city cemetery. Also, the county piped water into several of the cemeteries. A well was drilled for the Dry Fork cemetery but was abandoned. Water is now only available from a faucet on an irrigation pipe when there is irrigation water available. With the addition of water, most of the cemeteries have been planted with grass. Trees and shrubs have been placed in some of the cemeteries, while others disallow anything but grass.

Cemeteries now existing in the county include Vernal City Memorial Park, Rock Point Cemetery, Maeser Fairview Cemetery, Dry Fork Cemetery, Jensen Cemetery, LaPoint Cemetery, Tridell Cemetery, Avalon Cemetery, Gusher Cemetery, Hayden Cemetery, and Leota Cemetery. The Gibson Cemetery was covered by Steinaker Reservoir. The eight graves in this cemetery were exhumed and moved to the Vernal cemetery. Most of the bodies of the soldiers who had been buried at Fort Duchesne were moved to Santa Fe, New Mexico, with a few going to Fort Douglas in Salt Lake City.

Many graves of early pioneers are located on unmarked properties around the county. Eight other cemeteries with graves of Indian and Indian-mixed persons exist on the west side of the county including Ouray Valley Cemetery, Fort Duchesne Cemetery, Red Knoll Cemetery, a cemetery near the old Whiterocks Boarding School, Reed Cemetery on Farm Creek, John Harms Cemetery east of Whiterocks, and Daniels' Cemetery. A few early settlers are buried above Daniels' Ranch in LaPoint.

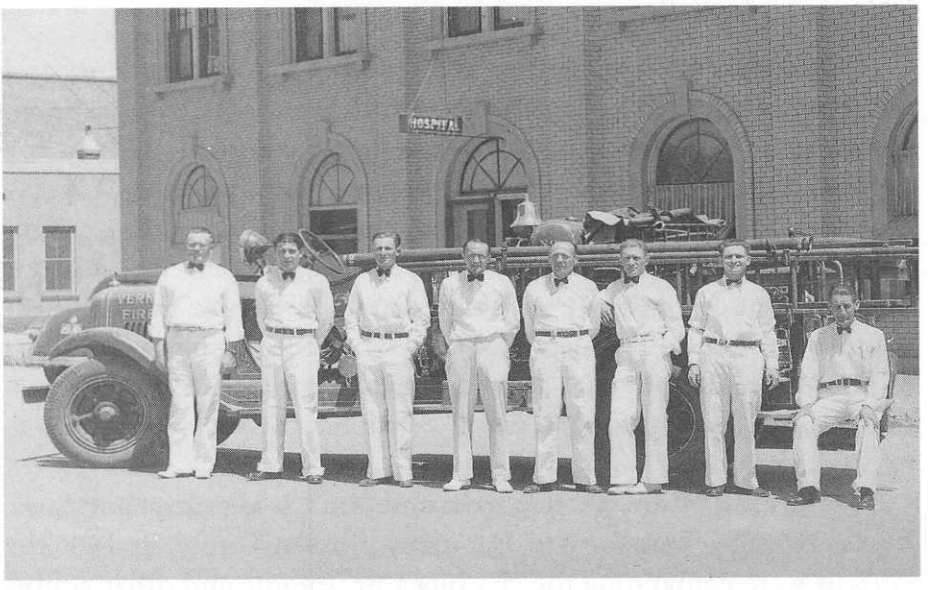
Fire Departments

Fire suppression is another important function the county and its cities provide. Talk of organizing a fire department in Vernal began before 1891. Fort Duchesne had a fire engine and fire house, but fire destroyed them in 1896. Numerous fires with lives lost and property destroyed were reported in the early years. In 1897 a building caught fire in the business district; and the townspeople realized that had it not been noticed and put out immediately the whole business section of wooden buildings would have burned to the ground. An effort was made to secure some fire equipment, with the feeling a hook-and-ladder outfit with plenty of rubber buckets would be better than nothing.

Some local businesses dug wells and purchased pumps and hose. Bucket brigades were formed, but many problems arose. By 1900 the citizens were demanding the city buy a fire engine and other equipment. City officers agreed and acquired a horse-drawn fire with 200 feet of hose. The engine could pump 120 gallons of water per minute, and with twelve men working a stream of water could be forced at least fifty feet above any building in town. One story is told of the fire bell ringing and Sheriff Pope racing horseback to the fire cart, throwing a rope on it, and racing towards the fire. A second rider raced up and also threw his rope on the "firecart critter," and they sped to the well nearest the fire.

The city fire engine was slow and was hampered by a shortage of water. The city council decided a plan was needed to provide a water system for fire protection. An adequate system would cost about $22,000 and did not materialize until 1910. In 1911 the city council decided to organize a volunteer fire department. George Adams was appointed fire chief and instructed to begin a volunteer fire department. Many men were asked to join the Vernal Hose Cart Company No.1. The hose cart was kept at the Uintah Livery barn in town. The cart was fitted up with shafts, new hoses, and a big alarm gong.

In 1915 the city purchased a used Ford car, fixed up with a fire hose on the rear. The car was kept in the Pope-Walker garage, ready to go in minutes. Later the fire department was housed at 25 South Vernal Avenue. Wives of the volunteer firemen organized a local aux-

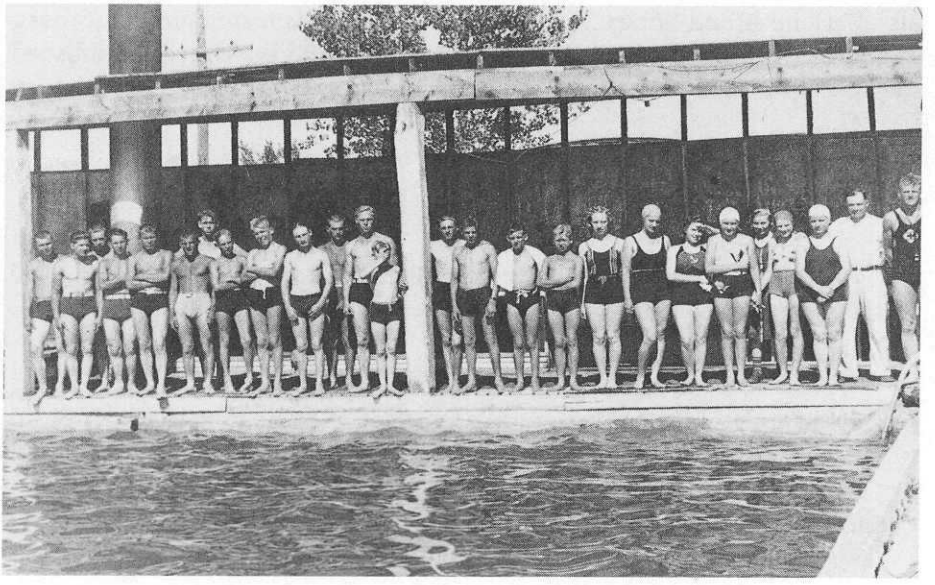


Vernal Volunteer firemen, Wendell Pope, Ace York, Mick Batty, Ken Richardson, Henry Millecam, Ralph Alexander, Henry Schaefermeyer and Joe Milburn standing by the fire truck about 1940 (UCLRHC collection)

iliary of the Utah State Firemen's Auxiliary at the home of Mrs. Henry Millecam, who became the organization's first president on 17 November 1934. In 1949, when the city offices were located in the old Uintah Railway building on Vernal Avenue at First North, the fire station was relocated to the garage on the north side and a fire alarm was located on top of the building.

About 1972 the city provided a fire station at 495 East Main behind the city offices. Four fire trucks were crammed into the small fire station, and this building was condemned by the state fire marshal. In 1990 Vernal City secured a no-interest loan of $150,000 for the construction of a new fire station. Uintah County matched the city's funds. The old station and Vernal city offices were razed, and the new fire station was built on the northwest corner of 500 East Main in 1991. A new fire truck was purchased for $180,000, making a fleet of five trucks. Other fire departments recently have been established at Naples City, Jensen, LaPoint, and Tridell. Fire services to the communities are continually being improved.[15]

The contributions made by the municipal and county govern-



Crystal Pool, Vernal's first commercial swimming pool. (UCLRHC, Vernal Express collection)

ments have brought improved quality of life to Uintah County residents. Local government has provided such intellectual and cultural services as libraries, health services, and protection for property and life. The county has some of the best roads in the state; law enforcement in the area is excellent. The county has an exceptional recreation program for young and old alike. Life in Uintah County is much better because of the variety of services provided. The first settlers who arrived in this valley in 1873 had a dream and a goal to make the land produce and build a secure future for their families. With determination and courage, those pioneers began the growth of Uintah County. Residents through the years have continued to add to the fruits of their labors. May the challenge and the dream of the early settlers to make Uintah County a better place to live continue to be the dream of future generations who choose to settle in Uintah County.

ENDNOTES

1. Vernal Stake Minutes, 13 September 1884, archives, Historical Department, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City. See

also Earlene Allred Smart, *A History of the David Johnston Family* (Smart, 1987), 27 (Johnston is usually spelled Johnstun), and Iva Gray, unpublished manuscript, copy located in Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

2. Minutes of the Board of Trustees of Vernal, 8 November 1897.

3. See *Vernal Express*, 27 September 1907.

4. Ibid., 1 January 1909.

5. The minutes of the county selectmen and commissioners from 1880 to 1900 contain many reports of money being spent to care for the indigent.

6. *Vernal Express*, 17 January 1919.

7. See ibid., 25 January, and 23 August 1934. See also speech given by Jeanne Stringham to the first graduating class of LPNs in the Uintah Basin in 1976, located in UCL Regional History Center.

8. For more information on Uintah County drug stores, see "Uintah County Manuscript History," in UCL Regional History Center.

9. Elisha Davis to Commissioner Price, 14 August 1883, *Reports of the Commisssioner of Indian Affairs, 1883*, 141.

10. Simon Peter Dillman, *The Life and Times of Peter Dillman* (Springville, Utah: Art City Publishing Co., 1954), 76.

11. Ibid.

12. *Vernal Express*, 15 March 1912.

13. Carma Nielsen Hacking, unpublished manuscript, copy located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center, folder 1943. See also a historical preservation intensive level survey of the Joseph S. and Nancy Nielson Home, UCL Regional History Center, folder 2050.

14. Charles R. Henderson (former hospital drive chairman), telephone conversation with author, 16 June 1996; see also "Slot Machines to Go," *Vernal Express*, 4 September 1941.

15. More details of the fire departments in Vernal and outlying areas can be found in Doris Burton's, "Settlement of Uintah County," located in the Uintah County Library Regional History Center.

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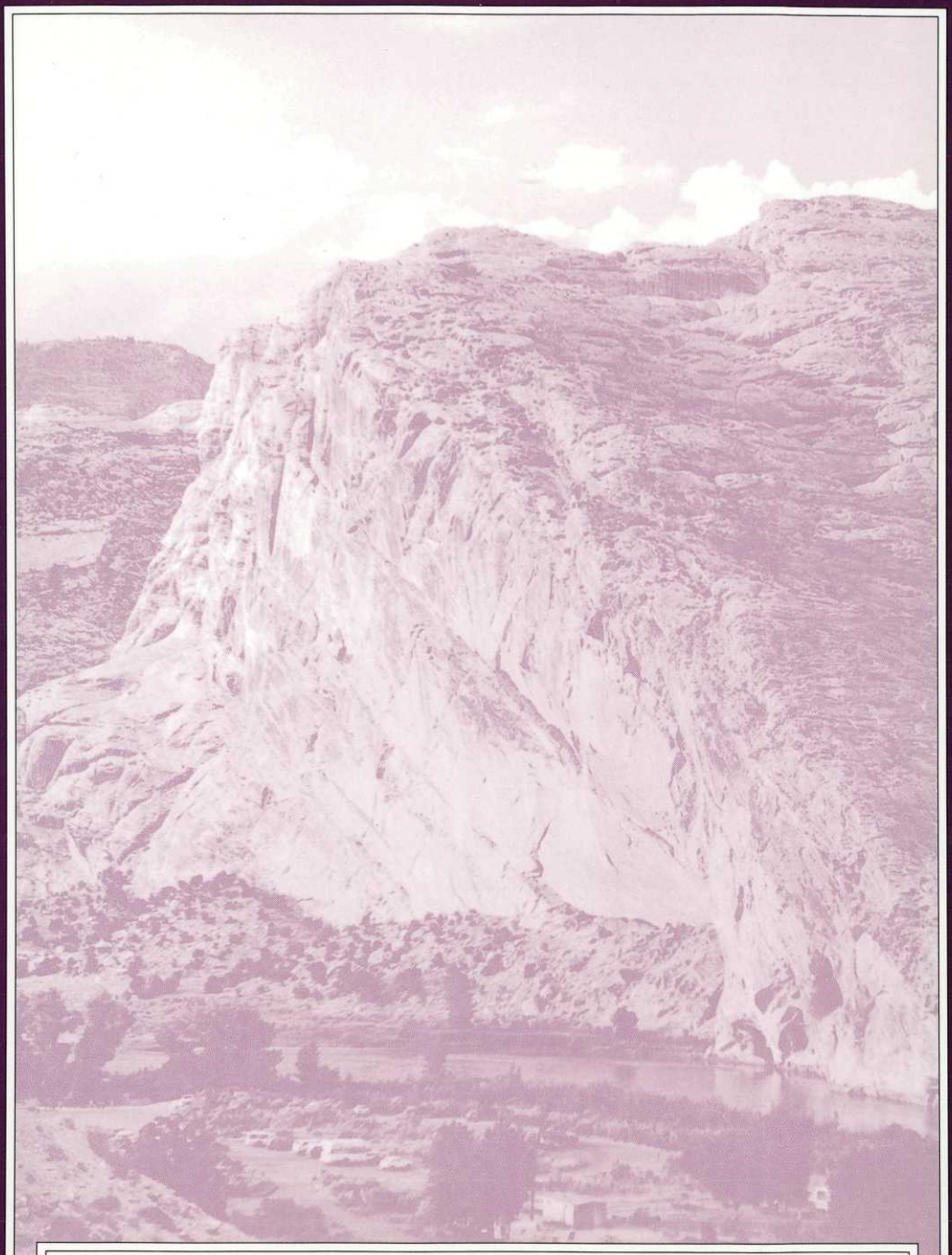
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